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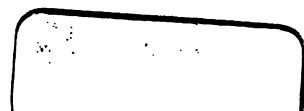
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THE
NORTHERN WITNESS

—♦—
VOL. VIII.



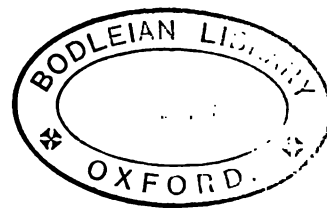
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JOHN R. CALDWELL.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
Address, Notes of an, <i>By George Lawrence,</i>	13	Mediator, The	125
Altar whereof we eat, The <i>By Macleod</i>	29, 39	Memoriam, In—James Cheyne,	143
Wylie,		Ministry of Women, The	148, 165
Anointing of the Lord Jesus, The <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	140	Notes and thoughts from a Conference,	179
Baptismal Truth. <i>By M. T. Bonnell,</i>	4, 22, 36, 54	Obedient Son, The	86
Baptized for the Dead,	125	Oneness of all Believers in Christ,	190
Basket of First Fruits, The <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	91	Only in the Lord. <i>By John R. Caldwell,</i>	113
Believer in Heavenly Places, The,	57	Ox and the Ass yoked together, The <i>By John R. Caldwell,</i>	97
China, The Gospel in	91	Poetry—	
Christians,	126	Alone, yet not Alone,	187
Comforter, The other	93	Immeasurable Love,	126
Conversation,	24	Nearing Home,	31
David. <i>By Henry Heath,</i>	61, 93, 109, 134, 168, 182	Psalm lxxx. 1; Rev. v. 6.	139
Epaphras,	141	Songs in the Night,	53
Extract, An	189	Possession of the Spirit,	25, 43, 56
Expositions and Notes—		Pre-arrangement as to Ministry and Worship at the Lord's Table. <i>By John R. Caldwell,</i>	17
1 Peter iii. 19; iv. 6. <i>By Henry Dyer,</i>	7	Priesthood and Ministry,	92
Luke xii. 32-48. <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	31	Rest. <i>By A. E. W.,</i>	100
2 Cor. iii. <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	46	Revelation. The A Book of Conquerors. <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	84
Ephesians vi.,	90	Revellings and such like. <i>By J. L. Harris,</i>	137
Job xvii. 4,	101	Sanctification. <i>By H. W. Soltan,</i>	40, 51
1 Timothy i. ii. and iii. <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	174	Sealing of the Spirit, The	150
Faith work,	139	Separation from the World. <i>By John R. Caldwell,</i>	81
Fellowship. <i>By Alexander Stewart,</i>	3	Service: its element and sphere,	26
Forgiven and Forgotten,	28	Shadow and the True, The	44
Giving of the Law, The <i>By J. L. Harris,</i>	119	Shadows of Christ. <i>By John R. Caldwell—</i>	
Go up to the Mountain,	24	The Passover,	1
Growth,	63	The Feast of Unleavened Bread,	33
Heavenly Calling, The <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	10	The Manna,	65
Higher Life, The	155	She hath done what she could,	184
Him that Overcometh, To	118	Shetland, The Gospel in	127
History of Man, The <i>By Macleod Wylie,</i>	116	Slothful Man, The	187
I am with you Alway,	122	Song of Solomon. <i>By William Lincoln,</i>	18, 68, 101, 131, 163
In Season and out of Season,	111	Spiritual Gifts,	60
Jacob a-dying. <i>By J. L. Harris,</i>	76	Spiritual Progress,	4
Jehoshaphat. <i>By John R. Caldwell,</i>	129, 145, 161, 177	Standing, State, and Walk, The Christian's	185
Judgment Seat of Christ, The <i>By A. E. W.,</i>	45	Stewardship. <i>By A. E. W.,</i>	90
Labourers and their Rewards. <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	83	Vine Tree, The	114
Lamb of God, The	170	Way of the Love of Jesus, The <i>By J. G. Bellet,</i>	21
Leaning upon the Beloved,	173	Word of God, Sharper than any two-edged	
Learning God's mind in Communion,	190	Sword, The	110
Learn of Me. <i>By Macleod Wylie,</i>	136	Working for Christ,	103
Levites, The <i>By John Ritchie,</i>	71, 87, 106	Ye do Show the Lord's Death till He Come,	47
Life-Giver and Judge, The <i>By Alexander Stewart,</i>	49		
Lord's Coming, The	171		
Lord's Supper, The	154		

1



SHADOWS OF CHRIST.

PART XIII.

THE PASSOVER—Ex. xii.

“For even Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us.”—
1 Cor. vi 7.

IN all the nine judgments that had been executed upon the Egyptians, Israel had been exempted; but the tenth was *death*, and therefore it represented specially the divine penalty pronounced against man as a sinner. This opportunity is therefore chosen by God to show forth in one of the most striking and comprehensive types which illuminate the page of Scripture, His gracious and yet righteous way of delivering an elect and believing people from that condemnation under which they, in common with all others, had lain.

The month Abib being that in which Israel came forth from Egypt, it was commanded by Jehovah that in the same month they were annually to observe this feast. This was to be to them the “beginning of months”—the first month of their year.

Does not this seem to teach that not until the sinner has sheltered from the wrath of God by faith in the blood of Christ, does he begin to live in the sight of God. Until then, although indeed foreknown and elect, yet was he dead to God. Then is he delivered, not only from the stroke of divine judgment due to him as a sinner, but also from the power of Satan (Acts xxvi. 18), and from this present evil world (Gal. i. 4).

Then is he “born again,” and as a new-born son of God he enters upon a new eternal life. He is in a new creation, and from eternity he will look back to that time as the commencement—the “birth-day” of his everlasting life. Whatever the moral character of the life that preceded that momentous hour, in God’s sight and in the reckoning of the quickened soul, it was only death and dead works.

The lamb was to be set apart upon the tenth day, and to be “kept up” until the fourteenth day. That is to say, it was to be three full days separated from the flock, set apart as the destined sacrifice.

It was to be “without blemish”. This was an essential point, for it was to be a fitting type of “the Lamb of God,” “our Passover”.

Hence the importance of the three days during which it was set apart or kept up—days in which it cannot be doubted that many an anxious look would be directed to the victim, to see whether it was in all points such as God could accept.

Thus at the very commencement of the three years during which the Lord Jesus moved before men in a public capacity, He was pointed out by John the Baptist. Twice is it repeated, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;” and again, “looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith Behold the Lamb of God.” (John i. 29, 36.) As if to call the attention of a nation which had just been warned of the coming wrath that should burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire, to the Lamb of God’s providing—to the mighty work He came to do, and to

the perfect character of Him who was to accomplish that work. And not only so, but as He rose from the waters of baptism God Himself, the Father, bears testimony to Him as the Lamb "WITHOUT BLEMISH." "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew iii. 17.) For three long weary years did He pass under the eye of man—tested and observed in private and in public by friend and foe. Tempted by Satan, at the outset He was proved to be "without blemish," for He returned from the wilderness even as He went to it, full of the Holy Ghost. (Luke iv. 1, 14.)

He could turn round upon his fiercest and most subtle adversaries, and in conscious holiness challenge them to find a blemish, saying, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin". (John viii. 46.) They sought to entangle Him by subtle questions, as if to find a blemish in His understanding where they failed to find it in His life. But they were so confounded that they durst not ask Him any more questions. (Matt. xxii. 46.) Brought to the bar of Pilate, even the representative of human judgment, whilst delivering Him up to be murdered, washed his hands before them all, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person". (Matt. xxvii. 24.) Pilate's wife adds her testimony: "Have thou nothing to do with this just man". Judas, in remorse, bore his last testimony, who had walked in His blessed company in closest intimacy from the first—"I have betrayed the innocent blood". And finally, the centurion, and they that were with him *watching Jesus*—watching those agonies so meekly borne, hearing those words of mighty love that dropped from His blessed lips—when they saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God, 'Certainly this was a righteous man'". (Matt. xxvii. 54; Luke xxiii. 47.)

Such was the testimony of man during the course of those three years—testimony of double value where it comes wrung from the unwilling lips of the adversaries.

But from God's point of view He was the Lamb without blemish and without spot, fore-ordained from before the foundation of the world, and manifest in these last times for us. To this fore-ordaining, or setting apart from eternity, there may also be allusion in the "keeping up" for three days. The suited propitiation was provided or over sin entered. Thus, in the plan of God, redemption preceded creation, and the issues of redemption shall be manifested and abide in the new

creation glories when the first heavens and the first earth have passed away.

The lamb was to be "a male of the first year". Thus as the Son of God, "our passover" is the Only-begotten; whilst, as the Son of Man, he was born of a virgin. He is also "the first begotten from the dead," and in resurrection, "the first-born among many brethren"—that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

"The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening." There were many lambs, thousands of lambs, yet it is said they shall kill *it*. In God's sight there was only ONE. Like the sun reflected in the drops of dew, there may be ten thousand reflections, but they all reflect the one sun. Every household had a lamb to itself. For each first-born to be saved, a lamb was slain. So every sinner who trusts in God's Lamb may know that he has a whole Christ to himself. It is told of an aged saint that at her cottage door on a summer day, she shaded her eyes with her hand, and exclaimed, "I've a whole sun to myself". Blessed is the reality in the experience of those who know Him, who find in Jesus a whole Lamb, a whole Sun, a whole Shield.

Safety was by the Blood, and the Blood alone. The perfectness of the lamb, necessary as that was, could not in any sense have availed to shield from the impending stroke. As one has forcibly remarked, The Israelite might have tied a live lamb outside the door, but that would not have availed. It was not life, but *life poured out unto death* that secured the doomed one from the coming judgment.

The life of the Lord Jesus, all perfect and spotless as it was, could never have afforded a righteous ground for God to justify the sinner. That holy life could only have proved a sevenfold condemnation.

If the law written on tables of stone ministered condemnation and death, how much more that holy law, lived out in human flesh, and in the very sphere where all was antagonistic to every act of obedience? Alas for those who claim salvation on the ground of the imitation of the life of Christ! Blessed is that example, and happy the imitators of it, if first they are "justified by His blood"—but miserable indeed is the delusion of those who, without being sheltered from the coming wrath, are seeking to copy that faultless life, and so work out a righteousness of their own. Too late they will find that the copy is blotted on every line—the righteousness "filthy rags".

The blood was to be sprinkled "upon the two side-posts and upon the upper door-post of the houses". It was thus to be *very prominent*, but not to be where it might be trodden under foot.

There is a religion abroad and a popular teaching that does anything but give prominence to the Blood of Christ. A contrast indeed to the teaching of God wherein the doctrine of the Blood—or life poured out unto death in atonement for sin, is the silver cord that runs from end to end.

And hence it is that so very special a testimony is borne to the fact of the death of Christ. Whilst as the true Passover "a bone of Him had not been broken" yet had His death been fully proved. "For," it is written, "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side and forthwith came there out blood and water, and he that saw it bare record and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that YE MIGHT BELIEVE." (Jno. xix. 34, 35.)

The blood sprinkled on the lintel and door posts was not so much for the eye of the one to be sheltered as for the eye of God. So it is written, "When I see the blood I will pass over you". It was essential to the peace of the first-born and of the household that they should know assuredly that the blood had been shed and that it had been sprinkled; but their *safety* did not depend on *their seeing* it or on *their realising* it, but on God seeing it and God passing over that house.

And herein is seen the Righteousness of God. *Death there must be in every house*: Either the death of the first-born or the death of the Lamb. So is it now. Either the sinner must die in his sins, or he must die in his Substitute. "I am crucified with Christ," said Paul, "nevertheless I live—yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust."

Herein then lies *assurance of Salvation*. The household would know on the warrant of the Word of God that they were as safe as God could make them. If there could possibly have been a slavish dread in any breast as the fatal midnight hour drew nigh how could it be dispelled—how could peace be found?

Not by self-examination, not by anything within

the heart or within the house—only *by the BLOOD of the LAMB and the WORD of GOD*.

And such is yet the only ground of settled peace for the anxious or unassured. Vainly they look within, vainly though often honestly, the attempt is made to find a ground of peace in experience, feelings, amendment of life, and other things. But these can be of no avail. The Israelite's safety lay in this, and in this alone that the blood was shed—the blood was sprinkled—the Word of God was pledged, and he, whatever his character, whatever his sin had committed himself in FAITH to the shelter of that blood, and had set to his seal that God is true. J. R. C.

FELLOWSHIP.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

AS to *fellowship* generally. Fellowship—the communion of the Holy Ghost—is a *fact*. The relationship of children in the family of God and members of the body of Christ is a God-established relationship, and the gift of the one Spirit, bestowed upon all, makes fellowship possible to all—nay, fellowship is proper and normal to all who have received the Holy Ghost. Starting with this, we must be careful, as far as we can, to draw the line of visible fellowship so as to exclude none who are in real communion with God. Of course it is God who brings men into the church which is the body of Christ. He sees the heart, we do not, although we have a measure of spiritual discernment which should be in exercise as to those whom we may receive into local and visible fellowship of the Church here on earth. We may make mistakes in taking them in, and mistakes also in putting them out. Being on the "right ground" certainly does not deliver us from liability to error in judgment. I suppose nobody questions that the early Churches (about whose being on "right ground" there is no dispute) went wrong, and we are at least as liable to err.

Each local church stands on its own base, and is primarily responsible for the reception of those brought into its fellowship for their discipline, and if absolutely necessary, for their excision. (This may be called "independency"—the name is not given by me.) The Word of God dominates each church as it dominates each individual believer, hence responsibility.

But there are many local churches in this world. Are we to associate or affiliate a certain number of these, so that reception by one of them is reception by all? To make them, in fact, the only true representation of the Church of God on earth, the sacred enclosure beyond whose pale is only confusion and error. I am not prepared to have part in this. We are a people who have struggled out of ecclesiastical associations which we believed to be wrong. We have sought back unto the original rock-fast foundation of the Church, other than which can no man lay. We have regained, if you please, the "right ground." How are we to behave ourselves upon it? Surely, if with faithfulness, with a great deal of humility, with an abundant readiness to acknowledge *all* that is of the grace of God, though not found among us, and a slowness to proceed to extreme disciplinary measures, making very sure before we bind on earth that Heaven endorses our judgment.

I cannot go on further into the subject, but let me put this question. If a mistake does not unchristianise a Christian, does it unchurch a church? Both should be led by the Holy Spirit, but if not?

A. S.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

IN sailing when the wind and tide are against us, there is a need be for tacking to gain the desired haven. To a person inexperienced to the sea and sailing, it looks as if time were lost; but it is not so. An experienced boatman sails his boat to the best advantage, and all the tacking he has had to make has been a means of at last bringing him to the desired place.

So with us in sailing through this world to heaven; there are many things that hinder our progress, both real and apparent; but God, who is at the helm of all our affairs, is guiding us for the best (Rom. viii. 28), and will at last land us safe in glory, no matter what cross winds and strong tides may come in the way to hinder us. (Rom. viii. 1-37, 39.) Paul was persuaded of this, for he knew *whom* he had *believed*. Let us, therefore, "have faith in God". God's perfect and unchanging love believed in makes love with us perfect, and casts out the fear that has torment. "We love Him because He first loved us." (1 John iv. 17-19.)

W. G. S.

BAPTISMAL TRUTH, OR, THE TESTIMONY OF ALL BAPTISMS. By M. T. BOSWELL, B.A.

INTRODUCTION.

READER, understandest thou what thou readest? Blessed is he that readeth, and they that understand. "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things."

Luke x. 26; Acts viii. 30; 2 Tim. ii. 7; Rev. i. 3.

This has been written after years of calm pondering of the subject, and after much prayer in order that my pen might be guided aright. Great plainness of speech has been used, for true love can be faithful. Reader, ponder what you read before God and in the light of His Word a few days at least before you pronounce upon it by that unruly member the tongue. Read with attention or do not read at all.

CHAPTER I.

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

"Knowing only the baptism of John"—But notwithstanding that, how Apollos preached, with what fervour he taught the things of the Lord! A testifieth the Holy Spirit, saying, that, being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John! (Acts xviii. 25.) But Apollos had received the true light from on high on this subject, and he well understood that which but too few Christians understand in this superficial and proud age.

He knew that this baptism, as *all* the ordinances of God, had regard to the Lord Jesus. Oh, that a ray of the light which illuminated the heart of Apollos might shine into the hearts of many of my readers, and disperse the darkness of many ages!

I will divide my readers into three classes. 1stly, Those who in spite of all their profession are the enemies of the cross of Christ, and who twist the doctrine of baptism (for all the baptisms of Scripture do teach but one lesson), in order to accomplish the wicked works. 2ndly, Those who approach the subject with their minds already made up, and having no desire to know what saith the Scripture. 3rdly, Those who approach this subject by the grace of God with an honest and true heart.

To the first class where are ranged a multitude of priests and ministers, transformed as ministers of Christ, though in reality ministers of Satan, I would

say, except you repent, your end will be according to your works, and you will be overwhelmed with eternal confusion.

To the second class (God only knows how large it is), I would say, repent and receive the truth, and embrace it, and live conformably to it, that you may not lose your Master's approval, and your reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

To the third class I would say, may the God of all grace and the Father of mercies instruct your hearts, lead you in the path of obedience, and make you to understand more and more the power of this precious truth of baptism.

Apollos then knew but the baptism of John, nevertheless he taught diligently the things which concerned the Lord Jesus. (Acts xviii. 25.)

Reader, I ask you if your heart has ever been filled with fervour in contemplating this baptism of John? If not, you know not what Apollos knew, you have need to be instructed afresh concerning the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. (Heb. vi. 1, 2.)

What was it then that Apollos knew? He knew that the baptism of John was from heaven, and that it concerned the Lord Jesus, and thus he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord.

John the Baptist himself, had preached with so much power this baptism, that it had prepared the way of the Lord; on two occasions at least the Holy Spirit had borne witness to its efficacy, saying "all the people that heard Him (Jesus) and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke vii. 29), and again, that "Jesus went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized and there He abode, and many resorted unto Him, and said, John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this man were true, and many believed on Him there." (John x. 40.) Again, Peter preaching for the first time the gospel to the Gentiles, makes mention of the baptism of John, thus linking it for ever on this memorable occasion with the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ and with His work. (Acts x. 37.) While we go on to perfection we must never forget the doctrine which the baptism of John, and that of this present time both teach. This doctrine will indeed be seen as we develop it, to embrace truths which lie at the very foundation of the doctrine of Christ.

We have seen that submission to the baptism of John with an honest heart, was a means of preparing

the way of the Lord who Himself subsequently instructed those who had submitted to it and brought them to a fuller knowledge of the truth. But how could this baptism become such a means of blessing?

In the first place it indicated that condition of heart which was willing to submit to the righteous requirements of God, in which God was able to work a true repentance towards Himself, and subsequently faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, to those who submitted in this spirit to this ordinance, it became a means of leading them on in the way of obedience and faith, and in this way Jesus was manifested to their hearts.

Secondly, this baptism, like every ordinance of God, as I have before said, (and this cannot be too strongly impressed on my readers,) bears a direct and striking testimony to the Lord Jesus in His death and resurrection. He who preached this baptism also bare witness in his preaching to Jesus Christ. The preacher and his preaching were but one voice. John the Baptist looked upon Him whom he had just baptized, the great baptized One, saying—"Behold the Lamb of God!" and two of his disciples followed Jesus.

There arose disputes between the disciples of John and the Jews on the subject of purification. (John iii. 25.) Even the disciples of John may have allowed themselves to be drawn into the errors of those Pharisees who baptized their hands before eating, and who also baptized even pots and vessels of brass, and other unconscious things (see in the Greek, Mark vii. 3, and Luke xi. 38), and confounded all that as well as John's baptism with purification.

But their great and faithful master John the Baptist, although he might well have spoken to his disciples of his baptism which was from heaven, preferred on this occasion to speak to them rather of Him to whom this baptism witnessed, saying, "a man can receive nothing except it be given to him from above," that is to say, that a man although he may have been baptized by John the Baptist or even by Jesus himself, can receive nothing except it be given him from above; that the only way of receiving the true good is through receiving the testimony of Jesus Christ; that he who receives this testimony has set to his seal that God is true; and that the reception of this testimony is an act of faith which gives eternal life to the believer. (John iii. 27 to 36.) While John Baptist directed thus the thoughts of his disciples toward Jesus Christ, he by no means turned their eyes away from the truth of baptism, but

rather brought out more fully its purport, making them to understand that the doctrine thereof, under a visible form which speaks to the eyes, as well as all his preaching, and that also of Jesus Christ Himself which spake to the ears, did but render one alone witness to the Son of God; thus all testimony, whether that of baptism or of preaching, possesses value *only* in measure as it directs the thoughts of man by means of faith towards Jesus and towards God.

In the first chapter of John's gospel and at the thirty-first verse, we have these very remarkable words announced by John Baptist. "But that He (Jesus) might be made manifest to Israel therefore am I come baptizing with water." If there were but this one verse, it would fully suffice to prove that the object of this baptism was to render witness to the Son of God, and that through this act he might be made manifest unto Israel. Behold Him, the innocent victim, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, to whom John Baptist bears this witness in immediate connection with the circumstances of his baptism in the Jordan (John i. 28, 29 and 31), thus showing that He appears as the great sacrifice in this very act of baptism or plunging under the waters of this river of Jordan, that is to say of judgment. Behold Him, I repeat, plunged under its dark waters in the place of death; again, behold Him coming up out of the water and walking in the land of promise, as the Good Shepherd of His people, so to speak, in the life of resurrection, and then we can well understand the force of that second testimony borne to Him by John Baptist, who looking upon Him as He walked, said, "Behold the Lamb of God". In this latter testimony no mention is made of sin-bearing, because it is borne to the Lord Jesus not now as the atoning Lamb, but to the one who has come up from the waters of baptism, atonement in figure having been accomplished. Standing under the eye and approbation of His Father in prayer (beautiful earnest of intercessory prayer by which he has received the Holy Spirit for His body the Church, after the awful baptism of the cross and His resurrection therefrom) the Holy Spirit descended as a dove and abode upon Him. (Luke iii. 21, 22.) Thus these two testimonies of John present our blessed Lord as the Lamb of God on the cross, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne who feeds His people, and leads them by the living fountains of waters. (Rev. vii. 17.) This latter testi-

mony then -- Behold the Lamb of God -- points to the Good Shepherd who having in figure already given His life for the sheep in the waters of baptism, and having I repeat, come up out of them in figure of resurrection proceeds on His mission of gathering His own round Himself. So we see that two of John's disciples who heard him speak leave him and follow Jesus, to whom John and his baptism both bare witness. Then, further, these two disciples are fellow-labourer with their Master in bringing others to the same Lord, and thus we see the Blessed Baptized One being manifested unto Israel. In perfect harmony with the fact of His baptism in the midst of publicans and sinners, a humbling ordinance, we find Philip in speaking of Jesus to Nathaniel, giving to Him one of his lowliest titles -- "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph". Thus is He presented to us as the despised One. Nevertheless, when thus received in His rejection He is known also as the "Son of God" and the "King of Israel," and as the One who shall yet be manifested in ever increasing glory. (John i. 36 to 51.)

But to return to our subject of the baptism of John, dear reader, I assure you that if ever a ray of the true light has reached you or shall reach you on this subject, you will well understand wherefore I repeat so often that this baptism bare witness to Jesus Christ, and occupied with the person of the Lord the hearts of all those who received the truth therein taught. Need I remind you that all the counterfeits of baptism turn away the eyes from off the Lord to the object, and the authors of such counterfeits? Oh, that you may consider that which I say to you, and that the Lord may give you to understand it! As all the Jewish ordinances of the Old Testament rendered one invariable testimony to Him who was to come; as did also all the books of that same Testament; so likewise the baptism of John rendered testimony to Him who had already come. During the ages of a past dispensation, bulls, and goats, and sheep, were the victims appointed to die in the place and stead of man, but now in the days of John Baptist the hour is come when man himself must die, as said John to the people who came to be baptized of him, "now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree, every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." (Luke iii. 7 to 9.) In consequence, the publicans and sinners submitted to his baptism, confessing their sins, and showed out by this act of

submission that the righteousness of God demanded their death, and that they refused not to acknowledge it. Thus they justified God and His righteousness, but the Pharisees and the lawyers "rejected the counsel of God against themselves" (or, according to the Greek, the purpose of God towards themselves, that is, their salvation through submission to His righteousness, Rom. x. 2, 3) "not having been baptized with the baptism of John." (Luke vii. 29, 30.) Yet in their ignorance and wilfulness, having substituted the doctrines of men for the commandments of God, they ever held fast their own peculiar baptism of vessels of brass, and pots, and beds, and such like unconscious objects, entirely confounding baptism with purification. (Mar. vii. 3 to 13. See Greek.) In passing, I may remark that the reader may now see that baptism is no purification, but the *death* in figure of that which can be neither remedied nor purified. Utterly failing to see this, the mystic Babylon and all her daughters have rejected the baptism of believers according to God, yet they hold fast and teach their own "baptism" of unconscious infants! They have rejected the great Baptized One, and all the baptisms that testify of Him, and have received another Christ, a worldly Christ, another "baptism," a worldly "baptism." Alas! that the true church of God becoming carnal and worldly should have allied herself with the Mother of Harlots and have adopted Satan's counterfeit, the sprinkling of infants!

ON 1 PETER III. 19-22, to IV. 6.

THE context of this passage helps to the understanding of it. The apostle has just before been teaching Christians to expect to suffer for righteousness sake, and not to be dismayed at it; and adds, in v. 18, that in this they are but like Christ, who when He suffered for sins "to bring us to God," suffered as a "just" one, even "to death" itself, as to the flesh, and all His quickening, and His life was by the *Spirit*, and in the *Spirit*: not in the flesh; thus making Him an altogether spiritual, and not a carnal Saviour; the whole end or fulfilment of our faith in Him being, *as respects this life and this world*, "the salvation of our *souls*," and not at all that of our *bodies*. Hence the word "souls" no less than five times in this epistle. See ch. i. 9; ii. 11-25; iii. 20, and iv. 19.

Full of this most flesh-withering truth, the apostle's mind reverts to God's work in the world in past ages, even back to the antediluvian age, and not only teaches us that it was all of it by Christ, but also that Christ,

in working it, was the same flesh-rebuking One then as now; and that all the salvation He testified of *then*, was for the spirit, and not for the flesh even as now.

For it was "*by the Spirit*," says the apostle, that he went and preached "in the days of Noah"; also, this preaching of a pre-incarnate Christ—a Christ in the spirit—was also addressed to spirits, even as His present preaching is to men's spirits, to subdue and to instruct and bless them.

And surely this was true of the preaching Christ in Noah's days. It offered nothing to the flesh; it ministered joy and rest to nothing but the *souls* of those who received it.

The believing it led Noah, and those with him, to give up houses and lands, and all they possessed, and to shut themselves within the narrow limits of the "Gopher-wood" ark, trusting that God would care for him and them, when there was, as yet, not a sign of the coming deluge, which did not burst on the fair and attractive scene around till seven days after. See Gen. vii. 10. Surely this was "suffering in the flesh," even as it also was to Abraham, in after days, to leave his country and kindred, not knowing whither he went. A touching sight, indeed—Noah, the family man, of six hundred years old, quitting all he possessed for value he put on God's word and God's favour, and thus voluntarily enclosing himself and those dear to him in the narrow vessel: and that spite of a six hundred years' connection with it all!

No wonder "the spirits" of the antediluvians around him rejected this flesh-crucifying testimony, and "were disobedient" to it, and would not receive it though "the long-suffering of God waited" for them, through the days of Noah. It was too humbling—too much in the Spirit for them—and too much unlike all the prevailing sentiments and habits of the days they lived in. They were too much charmed with the scene around them of men who were "giants in those days," and "men of renown" (Gen. vi. 4), to allow of their yielding to so spiritual a testimony. But Peter skilfully reminds us, his Christian readers, in order to help us in our present time of endurance, that these proud and towering spirits of those days are now "in prison;" they have lost, not gained by their insubjection; as Jude also reminds us that the flesh indulging ones of Sodom and Gomorrah may, by faith, be even now seen as enduring the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7). Wickedness of the *spirits* of Christ-rejectors is Peter's

point, as lusts of the *flesh* is Jude's. Esau-like they despised the spiritual boon because it was too pure and heavenly for them to value it. But they have lost, not gained. They despised God's well-provided ark, and would not enter it, which would have borne them upward above all doom and death to, as it were, a new earth: and now they are imprisoned in chains of darkness for ever. They would not have the shutting-in of the ark, they must have the prison house of hell.

But there was a *happy* result from this testimony of Christ in Noah's days, as well as a solemn and condemning one. "A few, that is eight souls, were saved by water"; and in this the apostle sees a lively image of ourselves as Christians—the "little flock"—the saved ones of the present time.

In the fewness of their number, in its being "souls" that were saved, and its being through water, the apostle perceives an analogy to ourselves, and especially in the last point of the three—viz., *through water*.

The early Church had all been baptized as soon as they believed—they were a company that had come up out of water. They had seen in this command of Christ a spiritual truth; it was to them the outward result of the request (see Greek) in them of "a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Christ".

But more than this, believers' baptism had proclaimed to them the judgment and coming doom of this busy and boasting world around them. As one says in a hymn upon believers' baptism:—

"Death to the world we here avow,
Death to each fleshly lust;
Newness of life our portion now,
A risen Lord our trust."

Our blessed Lord had said, in John xii. 31, in anticipation of His death—"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the Prince of this World be cast out;" and here in this Epistle of Peter, His saved Church—the little flock—are taught to see Christ, the Risen One in whom they have believed, as their ark, who has borne for them, from below and from above, the floods of death; and in whom they even now know themselves to be "more than conquerors" over a hostile world, that can indeed "kill the body, but after that has no more that it can do".

Hence, the result of Christ's work now is similar to the result of it in the days of Noah—viz., a few (comparatively) saved. And saved only in their souls, and

by a character of salvation that dooms the world around them to a flood of judgment: a salvation, too, which convicts all who despise or neglect it of disobedience and to faith shows all such to be, instantly on their death, "in prison"—or as Jude expresses it, "unde chains of darkness"—even as, while on earth, in the days of their unbelief they had "the wrath of God abiding" on them (John iii. 36), and were "the lost, whose "minds the God of this world had blinded". (Cor. iv. 4.)

In the beginning of chap. iv. Peter carries on this view of what Christians are in Christ. "Suffering in the flesh" is still the subject, and is seen to be true in heaven of Christ, who once thus suffered for us; and that which is true of Him being in God's sight, also true of us. Every Christian is *therefore* described as one "that hath suffered in the flesh," and has thereby "ceased from sin," just as Paul teaches in Rom. vi. 18. He became "free from sin" the moment he believed. To get this "mind," says Peter, is to get yourselves "armed against any longer giving way to the "lusts of men, all your remaining days on earth, and will make you to be such as the men of the world think to be "strange, and "speak evil" of. But Christ, who is thus your truly spiritual Saviour, will soon be their Judge, both of the then "living" and of all "the dead" of similarly rebellious character in ages past.

And in order to judge men in that day—even the unbelieving dead of all ages past—He will only have to point them to believers of the very gospel preached to them whom they well knew during their own day on earth, but whom they in their day thought to be "strange" people, and "spoke evil" of them. Thus will the Judge of the living and dead gather up the results of the gospel preaching of each generation of men, and will judge the guilty dead "according to men in the flesh," even those who were men of their own time; and this, says Peter (v. 6), was one reason why the gospel was preached to each generation of those now dead—namely, that they might, at a glance, see themselves to be without excuse, as they behold seated alongside of the Judge, in the day of the great white throne, "men in the flesh" of their own time, whose obedience of faith they refused to follow, and whose flesh-crucifying godliness of life they "thought strange, and "spoke evil of," and hated.

How solemnly, for instance, will the sight of an Abel condemn a Cain!—that Cain to whom God had said

"If thou doest not well, sin (*i.e.*, the sin-offering) croucheth at the door"—thus pointing out to him the same way of coming acceptably to God as that by which his own brother, Abel, had come. How conclusively will the very appearance of Noah and his family among the blessed in that day silence all self-justifying, or even self-excusing, in the raised antediluvians, when their re-quickened memories call back the days of the ark they saw him build, and for which they thought him "strange," and "spoke evil" of him. Thus, also, will Esau in that day be silenced by seeing Jacob—whose denying of himself the "mess of pottage," because of the value he had for "the birthright," which the huntsman of the field so mocked at. In that day; Eli's sons will hold themselves inexcusable for all their sinful handling of God's things, in the presence of that Samuel whose life was one continual testimony to them, and who could say—what *they*, with all their priestly office, could *not* say—"Behold, here I am: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass? or of whose hand have I received any bribe"? (1 Sam. xii. 3.)

Thus, also, kingly Saul will stand condemned by the suffering patience of his son-in-law David; and all the prophets will confront the different generations of those to whom their *lives* testified, as well as their lips and their writings, and will silence them.

And Peter teaches us that this was *one* object of the gospel testimony in all these different past generations—*viz.*, that refusers of it "might be judged *according to men in the flesh*"—that is, that men in the flesh of their own day and time on earth, might, so to speak, be Christ's "line and plummet" by which he should condemn them, and sweep away their "refuges of lies".

Oh, then, what manner of persons should we be all our days among men, in order that God, by our lives, may condemn the world. As Solomon says (Prov. xxvii. 11), "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, *that I may answer him that reproacheth me*".

But Peter adds another and a happier object of the preaching of the Gospel in every by-gone age as well as in the present age—*viz.*, "that men by it might live according to God in the spirit," that is, that they might see God in us by beholding our joys "in the spirit," suffer whatever we may in the flesh, and thus be drawn to eternal life. As John says (1 John iv. 12)—"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another" (and loving each other did in those days *cost* Christians something, even as it does now) "*God*

dwelleth in us," and men may thus know him. And again (John xiii. 35)—"By this shall all men *know* (whether they profit by knowing it or not) that ye *are* my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Thus is it true that the Gospel has been preached in all ages past that men might live in the spirit by the display thus made to them in the lives of the godly, of what a God of grace and love our God is.

Short, in every age, has been the sojourn of the righteous among the ungodly as a witness to them, it is true, and short, indeed, the Church's sojourn now will be; but long enough either to condemn them for unbelief, or to be a channel to them of divine life and of knowledge of God.

But let it be remembered that the power of this testimony in the earth, either to quicken men or to condemn them, depends on its clearness far more than on the length of its continuance.

Brief, indeed, were our blessed Master's "days of His flesh," but long enough for Him to be able to say "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness," John xii. 46. And He could also say, John xv. 22—"If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."

Such was the twofold bearing and the twofold result of our blessed Master's short visiting of men as a day-spring from on high and a "sufferer in the flesh".

Let us be diligent and faithful, that the Church's short time of "visitation" of the Gentiles may in some goodly measures similarly tend towards leading them to "glorify God" in this their "day of visitation." See 1 Peter ii. 11, 12.

H. D.

BISHOP BULL'S RECEIPT FOR DEPRESSED SPIRITS.—

I look *around* me, and think how many are in the same trouble as myself, perhaps much greater, and they have no Father to go to. I look *behind* me, and think of all the way I have been led, and the mercy upon mercy which I have experienced. I look *beneath* me, and think of the hell which I deserve, but which has no place for me. I look *before* and *above* me, and think of my Heaven at the door. Jesus my forerunner there, my God there, where through wondrous grace I shall soon be myself. And by the time I have looked at this last, all my trouble is gone.

THE HEAVENLY CALLING.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

BY MR. J. G. BELLET, IN MAY, 1851.

YOU remember at our last meditation we were tracing the history of the transfiguration ; and observing that, in the principle of it, it was no novelty in the history of the world. The instances were common from the days of Enoch. The moment the earth had perfected its corruption, the Lord translated one of His people to Heaven ; when the Cain world had corrupted itself before God, the saints in their calling became a Heavenly people. To me this is very plain. It is expressed by the translation of Enoch. And so at Babel. When they had perfected their apostasy, Abraham was called out to be a Heavenly stranger on the earth. And so, beloved, in the history of the Lord Jesus personally. If you trace Him from the days of the Bethlehemite—from the 2nd of Matthew—you will find Him resisted by the world in every form in which He was presented to them ; and in the 16th chapter of that Gospel He retires to the most distant borders of the land, and there opens to the hearts of His disciples, not hopes about the earth, but the fact of His rejection here ; and there, upon the holy hill, discloses the Heavenly glory. Now, I believe it is practically valuable that, in a day like this, we should have this laid up in the soul, with increased certainty of heart—that the calling of each of us is a Heavenly calling. I am sure I am speaking the principle of the mind of God. Your necessities link you with the world. You have to labour with sweat of brow, &c., for daily bread ; nothing more godly than to be linked by my *necessities* to the drudgery of the earth. Nothing more *ungodly* than to be linked with it by my *affections*. My necessities ought to be waited upon. Nothing is more beautiful than to see the Lord's poor people drudging to get their daily bread ; but while that is the case, we are to know this, that the call of the Church does not link her with the world, but separates her out of it. For the earth is now a judged scene ; the execution of that judgment is stayed ; but the world itself—the course of the world—is a judged scene ; and the call of God is, separation out of it. This has been beautifully figured from the beginning ; only the transfiguration on the holy hill gives us this additional thought (I do not see, if I read

the 5th of Genesis, where Enoch went to ; a Heavenly country waited him). But the transfiguration advances in this beautiful feature. It tells me that the Enoch family, that are to be carried to the Heavenly places are to be arrayed with the glories of Jesus—"Jesus in the midst, with Moses and Elias," &c. The transfiguration was told out in the story of Enoch before the flood, and in Abraham after the flood ; and the transfiguration is told out now by the call of the Church ; as we saw it was upon the holy hill, by the Lord shining with Moses and Elias. Now, the Heavenly calling has had its witness all down the line of the earth's history. It was so when the Cain world corrupted itself—when the Babel world corrupted itself—it was done in the personal history of the Lord Jesus. When Israel, to whom He offered Himself again and again, refused Him, He retired to the distant borders of the land, and opened Heaven to the eyes of the elect. And now, the same is done in the call of the Church ; and the Church is as much a Heavenly stranger as Abraham was, as Isaac—who dwelt in tents all their days—as the Lord Jesus, and Moses, and Elias were, when they were on the holy hill, transfigured, so that we ought to be handling truth that should be very familiar to our souls. And, beloved, now-a-days, when the world is putting forth some of its finest attractions, I am sure of this, it is not merely watching against its coming too near you ; that is very good in its place ; it is not merely judging the gross characters of it ; but I believe the soul of the saint, travelling on now, should be armed with a very simple and direct answer to the world—whether it bring in "improvements" or defilements, we are strangers to all. It is impossible to open half an eye to what is going on and not see that the world is multiplying its fascinations—how much it is "on the advance," as the saying is, and how the doings of this year give a greater share of large expectations how much the world will be improved next year ; and nothing will arm you to give this its answer but to be thoroughly assured in your souls that the call of God is—SEPARATION FROM ALL. The saint is neither to regulate it in its "improvements," nor to go with it in its defilements.

Now, I want you to trace the earlier chapters of the book of the Acts in a very short way, to see how the Church is conducted in the way that the Gospel Christ conducted Christ to the holy hill. And the analogy is this—the grace of God is exceedingly patient

with Israel. Look when the glory leaves the temple, in the book of Ezekiel; see how it lingers again and again over the city; how at one moment it comes to the threshold of the house; and again to the wings of the cherubim. What is the meaning of all this? Is all this mere scenery? Not at all; but all this beautiful action of the glory when departing from the house at Jerusalem is the expression to the soul of this—how reluctant the God of love is to leave the place where once He dwelt! So in the ministry of the Lord Jesus. He proposed Himself as a babe at Bethlehem. He was rejected and travelled as a Nazarene; again at Zebulun and Naphthali, &c. He is rejected, and He goes to the holy hill with His Heavenly elect. Then, in the 21st of Matthew, He offers Himself as a king to the daughter of Zion. He is refused again, and then He leaves the city, and says—"O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have," &c. Now, you see how reluctant the glory is to depart! I should not do myself justice to read this as scenery; but as the expression of the heart—of the love of God—that lingers over a loved object, reluctant to leave it.

And when the Holy Ghost comes down, the spirit lingers over the city as the Son had lingered over it. As Jesus had lingered over Israel in the Gospel by Matthew, so when the Holy Ghost comes down, and fills the infant Church at Jerusalem, you find that the business of the indwelling spirit of the vessel was still Jerusalem. Ah, beloved, there is not only a mind in Scripture, but there is a heart in Scripture. That is what I want to get into contact with. I have to do with a loving God, as well as with a living God.

In the first chapter of the Acts, the vessel is prepared. Judas by transgression fell; and the first thing to be done was to supply the vacant bishopric. Then, in the 2nd chapter, the "*treasure*" comes down, and fills the appointed vessel. Then the vessel begins to exercise itself; and in the course of this beautiful chapter, Peter, we find, is addressing Israel—"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." And then, when they cried out "What shall we do?" "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ," &c., "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Here we find the blessed Spirit employing this vessel in a beautiful way, testifying to the house

of Israel their rejection of Christ, and preaching the remission of sins.

Peter and Johngo into the temple. (3d chap.) They tell a lame man to look upon them. "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have," &c. Now how beautiful that was! At the gate of their temple—at the gate of that very house that had proved itself unbelieving. The Holy Ghost now comes down, and waits, in the power of His elect vessel, at the very gate of this apostate house. Well, all are moved. And Peter said (iii. 12) "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?" &c.

(13) The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus," &c.

Do mark this—God had never forgotten His ancient title. What does Peter go on to say, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted," &c. (19) "The Heavens must receive Him," &c. But till when? "Until the time of restitution of all things," &c. (21).

Now, in all this it is the glory lingering over the city. It is the patient grace of God still waiting to be gracious with the reluctant, unbelieving heart. It is the Holy Ghost doing the same business that Jesus was doing with Israel up to the 17th of Matthew, and further.

Then, in the 4th chapter, the enmity begins against the vessel of the Holy Ghost, as it began against Jesus in the days of His flesh (I am not going to read it all). But the enmity works. You are just, in spirit, in the early chapters of Matthew's gospel, tracing the rejection of the Spirit's witness to Israel, as you trace the same rejection of the Son's testimony by the very same people.

And in the 6th chapter all this enmity is wrought up to its full. We find Stephen "full of the Holy Ghost" contending with Israel about the faith of Christ.

(8th ver.) "And Stephen, &c., did great wonders, &c., among the people."

(9) Then there arose up certain of the Synagogue, called the Libertines, &c., disputing with Stephen. "They could not resist the wisdom by which he spake," &c.; but, as they treated Jesus, they treated Stephen.

Now, there is the transfiguration of Stephen. There is first the 17th of Matthew, when Israel would not be pleaded with; and here, when they refused the testimony which the grace of God was proposing to

them, by the Holy Ghost, as of old He had proposed it to them in the ministry of the Son, it was time to break open the Heavens; and you get the transfiguration of the Church, of the elect family of this age, represented by Stephen; you get them standing in company with the Lord, in the virtue, in the power, and joy of the heavenly glory. And it tells us this—Jesus cannot enjoy anything without His people. He did not come here to be a solitary King of Glory; He came to gather a happy family around Him. But if the earthly people refuse Him, He is transfigured—He betakes Himself into a Heavenly flight above; but He cannot be alone there; and this is the secret of the call of the Church now; this day and every day He is gathering in His saints, until the remnant of His elect be accomplished. And this transfiguration of Stephen here is a witness to me, that if the Heavens have received him, the Heavens will receive a family with him also.

Now, mark the 7th chapter. The business of it is to shew from the beginning, from the stories of Abraham, &c., that what was now doing at the gate of Jerusalem was a thing known from the beginning (vii., 1, 2, 3, &c.).

Just exactly what was going on in Stephen's person—the God of Glory was separating him to Himself. The Lord was doing with Stephen at this moment what He had done ages before with His servant Abraham when the earth had corrupted its way.

So also with Joseph. The patriarch moved with pity, &c., verse 9, &c. "But God was with him." There is the secret. How blessed this is! The God of Glory was with Abraham in Canaan (though he possessed not a foot of ground) every moment of his journey, and God was with Joseph in the place to which the enmity of his brethren had separated him. Oh, how distinctly you and I ought to read our calling! By faith Abraham knew God was with him. Joseph, by faith, knew God was with him, whether in the dungeon or palace it mattered not—God was with him. Now, you don't see the God of Glory any more than Abraham; but it is the business of your soul to know that He is with you as well as Abraham, and I will tell you why. We are just in the condition that Abraham was—just the same title to know that the God of Glory is with us as He was with him. Our faith may be weak; but it is as much a truth to you and to me as it was to Abraham, that it is none less

than the God of the holy hill—the God of Glory, the God of the transfiguration who made Stephen's face to shine as an angel—who is also with us. And can you be in company with such a one as that, and find you home in the world? That is the question. Was it possible for Abraham to be in Canaan and Mesopotamia at the same time? And so now, though our separation be not physical separation, it is as distinctly as perfectly, as morally true as ever it was, that the God of Glory is gone with His elect out of the world. It is as true that the God of Glory has separated His Church from the world, whether "improved" or lost in condition, as truly as He separated Abraham from Mesopotamia, or Joseph from his kindred in the flesh.

This is the business of this beautiful chapter. So he goes on, in a like manner, with the story of Moses. I do ask you, is it possible to mistake where you are—where the Church of God is—when it stands in the light and understanding of this magnificent 7th of Acts? It is a saint, conscious of Heavenly glory, interpreting his position, and finding his blessed company with Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and the Lord Jesus. And now, will you give up such company as this, and go back and busy yourself in an "improving" world? It is nothing to me whether the world is "improving" or whether it be corrupting. Sure I am it is going on to judgment. To a Heavenly stranger this is no matter—we stand in the light of our transfiguration; and, at the call of the God of Glory, we strike hands with Abraham, with Moses, and with Joseph, and we interpret our position to be one that has put us outside the course of this present evil world.

Now look at the closing verses, and we see how wrought with personal power in the soul of dear Stephen. "He, being full of the Holy Ghost." Now where did he look? Where did Simeon look when he went into the temple, and saw a child there? Being full of the Holy Ghost, he saw the hidden glory. This is always the business of the Spirit—to disclose hidden glories. And when Simeon went into the temple, and saw the child—the temple was full of glory; there was a gorgeous religion there, priests in robes, and ceremonies to attract the carnal sense—but the Holy Ghost disclosed a hidden glory in that infant to Simeon. The star in the east, doing the business of the Spirit, disclosed to the wise men the hidden glory of the babe of Bethlehem. And when the Holy Ghost now fills Stephen, he guided his eye to heaven

"But he, being full of the Holy Ghost looked up *steadfastly* into heaven" and saw the glory, &c. Oh, there is something very affecting and striking in this. It was not that the glory was sought for on the earth, but the Holy Ghost guided his eye to his native country. Now are you conscious that this is the attitude of your souls every day. When you think about glory, do you think about glory *there*? The Holy Ghost did not take him down to the temple to see a child, or to a manger to gaze on hidden glory there; but he guided his eye upward to the heavens—there to see the glory. Oh how blessed this is, and Oh what a chapter this is! How it shews you and me, reflected in the person, and thought, and heart of this dear man what your place should be, as to your person, conscious as Stephen was: that you are a child of transfigured glory; and as to your intelligence, you ought to be tracing the history of the world—the Church—the doings of God from the beginning; and, like Stephen, make yourself happy in the thought, that the God of glory who called Abraham out of old, has called you from the present evil world; and then, looking up to heaven to see the end of your expectation *there*. Now is this your attitude? Have you done with the world for the present, and has the Holy Ghost so guided your eye, that it is from heaven you are looking for the answer of your expectation? And was this eye disappointed? When Zaccheus went up into the tree, did Jesus disappoint the eye? No. And so, when the Holy Ghost guided the eye of Stephen upward, heaven gave that eye an answer. May the Lord put our souls a little more into this heavenly attitude! And then I ask you, had Stephen any doubt that heaven was his property, just as much as it was the property of his master Jesus? Could he have a doubt about it? "Lord Jesus receive my Spirit!" And have you any doubt about it? Have you the same certainty that heaven is your property as it is Christ's? Have you, beloved? Can we with the apostle say, "I know in whom I have believed?"

And then look at the moral power of all this. The last words of Stephen were, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". Oh what a beautiful character! A heart full of intelligence of heaven; an eye full of the glory of it; a faith full of the certainty of it; and a Spirit that breathed out benediction on his earthly murderers! The Lord Jesus is to us at this moment what he was to Stephen in the magnificent 7th of Acts.

Oh to be a separated people! Whether the world be "improving" or corrupting, we have nothing to do with that; but wait, till the Lord judges it, and then shares it in ten cities and in twenty cities with his redeemed and transfigured people. Oh may we not take up this book merely to pass a moment, but may we say—"Write these things on the fleshy tables of our hearts!"

NOTES OF ADDRESSES

AT THE

GLASGOW FAST-DAY MEETINGS, OCTOBER, 1877.

Mr. G. LAWRENCE

Read Matt. xi. 25; Acts iv. 24-30.

IN our opening prayer was asked that we might know the Lordship of Christ, and that we might be subject to Him, and thus led by the Holy Spirit. We have been hearing of God (Isaiah xl. 21, &c.) who is great in might, who hath created the heavens, who bringeth forth their hosts by number and calleth them all by their names, who controls us, in whose hand our breath is—in whom we live, and move, and have our being; and here we have (Matt. xi. 25) the words of the Son of God as He lifts up His eyes on high and sees His Father and His God, who holds all things in His mighty hand, who sits upon the circle of the heavens as universal Governor. He owns Him to be "Lord of Heaven and Earth," and yet He puts Him beside a babe! Can we imagine a greater coming down than this? All this glory, power, majesty, wisdom, coming down and concentrating itself upon a babe. God passing by everything to know and look upon and instruct a babe. Oh, this shows to me the marvellous grace and tenderness of God, that all this might come down to that which is the most perfect type of weakness and need of tender care, a babe!

So in Acts iv. He passes by the wisdom and strength of man that raged against the Babe of Bethlehem, the "Holy Child, Jesus". Oh, may our hearts take in this expression, "the Holy Child, Jesus". It is to this we must come down—to be subject and lowly like this Holy Child, if we would prove the Lordship, power and grace of Him who is Lord of Heaven and Earth. If from all the Scriptures that have been brought before us, or may yet be brought before us to-day, we are to carry away any blessing in our souls, it will be carried away by the babes, the little ones, the feeble ones, the lambs—for He who is omnipotent gathers the lambs

in His arms and carries them in His bosom. Do we sing of the mighty strength of His arm and the deep love of His heart?—it is all thrown around the babes.

Are you a Peter, very strong, very true-hearted, very desirous to serve the Lord, then he says, "Peter, feed My lambs".

May the Spirit wither up whatever hinders the power of God in us, whether as individuals or as assemblies, our wisdom, our strength, all that the flesh glories in; then shall this lullaby song of Jesus sound sweetly in our ears.

Oh, that the Lord would take us up, and make us babes in wisdom and in strength, whether we be pastors or evangelists; may we be laid down and rocked in the cradle of infinite love.

Take that evangelist Jonah. What was God's difficulty with him? He had no difficulty with the worm, it did His will; none with the gourd, the east wind, the fish; these were obedient to God because He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, who made the dry land and the sea, and all that is in it. He had no difficulty with Nineveh nor with the King, who, after the word of God came to him, arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes, whilst the whole city went into mourning. But where was the man who was wrestling the plan and counsels of God? It was that wilful Evangelist, Jonah. If anything is more out of place in creation than another, whether it appear in the church, in the family, or in the world, it is when our souls are out of their baby place before God. Such is the sad condition of our souls that we don't know how to come down and humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Here is the cause of all our difficulties. It is written, "Thou hast regarded the *low estate* of thine handmaid". Oh, if we are only led to cry out from the belly of the hell into which our sin and pride have brought us, then will He regard our low estate and hear our cry.

Ere power is given, and blessing flows out, and Evangelists are thrust forth, we must come down to be babes. We must come down to confess our evil ways, not only in the church, but also in the family, and wherever we have failed to exhibit the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

Mr. GRANT. Read Romans xv. 5-6.

It might have been profitable, did time permit, to consider the preceding parts of this Epistle. After

God shows us sin in its hideousness in His sight, and then how we have been justified, and sanctified, and glorified in Christ Jesus, then his dealings with Israel nationally, the remainder of the Epistle is filled with admonitions, &c., to those who have learned the previous parts.

The object of all these exhortations is, as shown in this 6th verse of chap. xv., to "GLORIFY GOD". This is the very opposite of glorifying self or man. If we are not "like-minded one to another," we are hindering the glory of God, we frustrate the very object for which He has called us out of darkness into light. Being "like-minded" does not mean forming a party. This letter was written "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints". We need to go to "the God of Patience" for patience to be "like-minded," and we shall want the consolation also of the "God of Consolation". When we fall into a party spirit, there is surely a lack of the enjoyment of Divine consolation. But our like-mindedness does not mean our being like any saint, neither does it mean "*agreeing to differ*," neither is it to be attained by "smoothing over" differences—it is to be according to Christ Jesus. Though we ourselves are blessedly constrained to go outside the camp, yet none can hinder us from embracing in love by the Holy Ghost all who are God's children. Though they be not with us, but gathered elsewhere to-day, we can take them up in the arms of faith, and hold them up before God.

Now it is a reproach to go forth outside the camp unto Christ. But if we get known as holding certain opinions which the world can understand then it will be no reproach, and when reproach ceases, and we become respected and understood by the world, then it will go ill with us.

To find what the Holy Ghost means by being "like-minded according to Christ Jesus," turn to Isaiah, chap. xlii.

What a teacher we have! Who hath instructed the spirit of the Lord? With whom did He ever take counsel? He searches all things. He is with our brethren in their little villages as well as with those in the great cities. He is with us in our difficulties and trials, and He shall abide with us for ever.

"Behold my servant." After referring in the two previous chapters to our tendency by nature to bring down God into the likeness of something after our own mind, the spirit brings before us in this chapter Christ

as the pattern servant. Had the Word, in Matthew xii. 18, not told us who this servant was, surely we would have guessed, for to whom could it apply but to Him who did only the will of Him that sent Him?

In these three verses we have the perfect pattern according to which we are to be like minded. Let this be our exercise to-day, to behold Christ in some of His characters as Shepherd, Lamb, Servant, but always Christ.

"My servant whom I uphold." In coming to the Word we need both the eyesight and the light. I have sometimes gone to the Word and have seen what was *not there*, and have *not seen* what *was* there. Thus I have been ready to judge my brother where the fault was in my own eyesight.

As one who was brought up in this country, and has been many years away from it, I see a great change. There are now many gathering together who desire to take this blessed Word of God as their only guide, as that by which they stand, and upon which they risk all.

Beloved, we have here a difficult path, but not different in that respect from the path of Christ, who is here set before us as the pattern servant upheld by Jehovah.

Don't let us want to get out of the difficulties. Be thankful for the difficulties; they are occasions of learning the faithfulness of God. The Lord Jesus came full of blessing. His difficulty was to reach the poor ones that needed the blessing. With gifts His hands were filled, and there were the needy ones; but oh, what difficulties were placed in His way in conveying these gifts to the needy! The publicans and sinners offered the least opposition. Pharisees, scribes, priests, and lawyers were the greatest opposers. His path was among thorns and briars. He lay down among lions.

If asked an explanation of this passage, "like minded to Christ Jesus," we should say, go through the Gospels and look at the various aspects in which the Holy Ghost presents Christ, for He delights to show Christ to us, and then you may know the meaning of the words "according to Christ Jesus". How otherwise can we walk through the tangled maze of this world except by constant meditation upon Him who is the pattern servant, and whose path was beset with like difficulties to ours.

The great difficulty is to love those who in their hearts and lives oppose us. To follow in His steps, without bitterness, or anger, or malice.

"Mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." Let our souls rejoice in this, God's servant is God's elect. All

the boundless power to love that is in God finds a suitable object in Christ.

"I have put my spirit upon him." The Spirit put upon Him for our salvation, that He through the Eternal Spirit might offer Himself without spot to God.

"He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." The Gentile needs to have things cleared up for him. Let us not go for judgments or decisions to any but to God's Elect One.

"He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." He said, "I am a worm and no man." Like Him, let us not seek the praise of man, let us desire to be kept clear of notoriety. "But," says some one, "my service requires it." Perhaps so, but it is *most dangerous*.

"A bruised reed shall he not break." What is more worthless than a "bruised reed"? As long as it is whole it may be of some use, but if bruised of what service can it be? And yet the Lord would not break even a bruised reed.

I do not think there are so many broken hearts now as there were thirty years ago. Believers did not then know the Gospel so well. The devil has his evangelical sinners, who are quite familiar with the theory of the Gospel. Let us not neglect nor be indifferent to the bruised ones.

"The smoking flax he shall not quench." Is not our love like smoking flax rather than as we read in the Song of Solomon, the love that hath a most vehement flame.

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" 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Ministry of the Word.
" 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Asking and answering Questions*
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From 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., Prayer.
" 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Ministry of the Word.
" 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Asking and answering Questions*
7 p.m., - - - Addresses to Believers.

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ON PRE-ARRANGEMENT AS TO MINISTRY AND WORSHIP AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

I MAY say that time and place, and almost as definitely, duration, of meeting around the Lord's Table are pre-appointed, because of necessity, and that the principle of God's word may be carried out which is contained in the words, "tarry one for another," and, "when ye come together." The divine intention surely is that all be together, and continue together so long as may be for edification and consistent with the fulfilment of other duties. Hence the *necessity*, not *expediency*, of a pre-appointed place and time such as shall best fall in with the domestic or other duties and relationships of the whole Church.

Moreover, in this respect we have the example of the Lord Jesus. (Luke xxii. 7-14.) The leading of the Spirit of God, however inward, emotional, or impulsive it may or may not be, is subject to principles of sound spiritual understanding—so much so that no chapter in the New Testament contains more that has the sanction of reasonableness and common sense than 1 Cor. xiv.

Being come together into one place, three questions arise to me. 1. Does any *necessity* of the case demand the pre-appointment of the persons that take part, or the sequence of the exercises. 2. Does any scripture authorise such a pre-appointed order? 3. Is there any New Testament example of it? If, as I apprehend, these three questions must be answered in the negative, I proceed then to inquire what has God said concerning the order of His assembly as gathered together. I turn at once to 1 Cor. xiv., and there find what can-

not be construed into anything but an open meeting, where every function of the membership of the body of Christ is at liberty; the only restraints imposed for the security of order being the silence of the women, distinct and intelligible utterance, and one only to speak at a time, with the additional general principle as a fundamental of the whole—"Let all things be done unto edifying".

The disorder that had already arisen was not to be rectified by the introduction of a pre-appointed ministry, or by any rule that would hinder orderly and edifying prayer, praise, thanksgiving, and ministry of the Word.

I say "ministry of the Word" instead of "prophecysings," because I do not believe that the gift of prophecy abides among us, but that which answers the same purpose in the souls of God's children does abide ever since the completion of the Scriptures, viz, *teaching*, which deals only with the written word and *exhortation*.

Thus whilst the character of this ministry may have changed, no change is recorded or necessitated as to order.

The great practical difficulty which all have felt who have committed themselves in faith to this more excellent and scriptural way, is the tendency in meetings which are not pre-arranged for those who are not teachers to teach, those who are not exhorters to exhort; and in other ways the continual liability to a spurious and unedifying ministry, which is simply a base imitation of that which is desired and contended for, viz, the ministry which is of and in the power, wisdom, and love of the Spirit of God.

On the other hand, those actually gifted are silent, or silenced by the forwardness of others.

A short and short-sighted way of meeting this difficulty, ever at hand, often suggested, and abundantly practised, is *pre-arrangement*.

But I cannot accept this method—first, because I do not find it in Scripture; secondly, because individual responsibility to the Lordship of Christ, and to the leading of the indwelling and ever present Spirit of God, forbids it; and thirdly, because I believe Scripture provides a divine way of rectifying the evil.

Upon this last point suffer me to enlarge a little. Suppose for a moment that each member of the body of Christ of which an assembly is composed be in real subjection to the Lordship of Christ, and so guided by the Spirit of power and of love, and of a sound mind exercising its own functions for the edifying of the whole;—would not the result of such a condition of things be true scriptural order and the maximum of edification?

What then is the reason that such is not the rule? I reply, because of the ignorance and wilfulness of the people of God. Many do not understand these principles, for they have not been instructed in them. For such what is the divine remedy? I answer, the work of the teacher in all patience and faith.

For God does ever deal with His children as having the capacity to understand His mind. He says, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say".

On the other hand, many not only lack understanding but are wilful and unruly. For such there is by God's appointment the work of the Ruler.

As in the Government of the world, the purpose of rule is to repress the lawless so that liberty may be conserved, so one important purpose of rule in the Church is the restraint of the flesh, so that every hindrance to the liberty of acting as guided by the Spirit of God may be removed.

There are some "whose mouths must be stopped," others to be "warned," others "sharply rebuked," others to be "rebuked before all," others to be severed from fellowship, and all this is the work of *Rulers*, not acting arbitrarily without the Church but as leaders and guides, who have the confidence and love of the saints, and who commend themselves to the consciences of all.

In no scripture can it be shown that pre-arrangement is a part of the functions of a ruler.

Had this divinely-appointed ministry of rule in the Church been duly observed there would have been less occasion of stumbling to those who are feeling after Scriptural principles of church order.

I would only remark further, and generally, as to this principle of liberty in the assembly—that just because it is divine it tests as no other system does or can, the condition of individual souls.

If envying or pride, or lawlessness of any kind, be a work it is manifested at once to the grieving of all. I allowed to go on without judgment the disintegration that results generally issues ere long in a falling to pieces. This is part of the perfection of the system instead of an argument against it. On the contrary, every principle of pre-arrangement tends to obscure and therefore to perpetuate the wrong condition of individual souls. But this is what Satan desires and what the carnal mind approves, hence the extending of the system even to a Liturgy which can be proceeded with where the worshippers are dead in sin. J. R. C.

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

BY W. LINCOLN.

PART II.

Dialogue II. from Chap. iii. 6, to v. i.

IN this next dialogue, the Bride's companions first break the silence. Their language is expressive of wonderment at such an one as "SHE" * had been commencing to tread the path of simple obedience to His already uttered word, "Come out, My fair one". Now the fact of this colloquy beginning in this way by attention being called to her compliance at length with what He had so earnestly enjoined in the preceding discourse, and for her former inattention to which she had suffered in her soul so very much; all this goes to prove that we are on the right track towards the clue as to what follows, and likewise that the interpretation given of the preceding dialogue is the true one. For in this way the two strikingly combine. Her hesitation her reluctance to act so as would cause such pain to the flesh had been overcome in the Lord's way, of teaching her to know the value of His company and of His smile enjoyed only as we obey His will. And inasmuch as

* The word "this" may be of course either masculine or feminine. But in the Hebrew, the word is feminine. So the word 'She', gives the sense more clearly.

He had not modified His first injunction, so in the opening of this next scene, here she is beheld not only actually at length heeding His word, but with His presence, as we shall see, accorded to her with allusions to the divine glory as known both in the Tabernacle and Temple, His commendation of her beauty, when once she has begun to obey, in seven particulars, His second invitation, "Come WITH ME from Lebanon;" His addressing her in the language of fond affection, calling her His "spouse," now that she is obedient no less than six times over, whilst elsewhere this language is not found once,—and much more to the same effect. She, overpowered by His love, can say but little, yet that little is most expressive, for it betrays she has drunk in His mind, since she begins to invite Him to come to her. Nor is He in the least tardy, as she had been with Him, to comply with her uttered desire, for He responds at once. Thus by this summary of this sixth dialogue, all is seen to be clear and coherent, and following beautifully in its place after the previous one.

The language of these companions is, I repeat, the language of amazement. We are in many ways, a wonder unto others. Nor is it the least wonder, that we who were such haters of God, can be so attracted by His grace as to delight ourselves in His commands. In like manner, is that third prayer of the Apostle in Ephesians i. to the effect that we "may know the exceeding greatness of His power in usward who believe"—a power similar in kind to that which raised Christ from the dead, and now displayed in producing and then in sustaining our faith in God.

Her passage out to meet the Bridegroom-King (verse 11) is first paralleled with Israel's passage through the wilderness. The Shechinah and the Tabernacle of God were with that people. Whilst as to themselves they were regarded, as God witnessed to Balaam, in the very last year of Israel's wanderings as still so perfect in His sight through the blood of the Paschal Lamb and through the offerings of sweet savour and the incense constantly ascending in their behalf, that He could say "I have not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither have I seen perverseness in Israel". And surely it is a primary and fundamental lesson which we must well learn, ere there can be any heartiness in our obedience to Him, viz., that we are "clean every whit," only needing daily to correct our walk and to wash our feet in the

water of the word. "As we have received Christ Jesus our Lord," who is everything that our souls can crave, and far more before God for us, so then accordingly, correspondingly are we to "walk in Him," rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith of Him. What is He?—what His preciousness before God? Such are we in Him. If He is our righteousness, then are we made the righteousness of God in Him. It is, I believe, on purpose to inculcate and drive this lesson quite home to our inmost souls, as to what we are before God, as the divine incentive to prompt and entire obedience to one who has loved us so well, that those four dialogues forming Part One, brief indeed in language, but intensely full of rich doctrinal truth, stand first in this Song. And thus we obtain another illustration of the well-known truth that doctrine from practice, or practice from doctrine, must never be dissociated.

But here, before we go further, I had better explain that the word rendered "bed" at the beginning of verse 7, would have been more aptly translated "litter" or "palanquin". (Compare 2nd Sam. vii. 2.) Nor will the reader be surprised at the mention of the word Solomon in this connection rather than David, if he recalls to mind my opening remarks in the Introduction to the Song. And as David the warrior prepared for Solomon the peaceful, so the Tabernacle for travelling must finally give place to the Temple of eternal rest. Indeed there is here one certain allusion in this very verse 7 to the account of the closing days in David's career, when the list of David's mighty men is furnished, and which, without counting the chiefs, is stated to have numbered "thirty". The anti-type of this may be designed to suggest to us that every one of all Christ's saints, even the weakest, should follow Him at the beginning of His service, which commenced at His baptism, when He was thirty years of age. Yea more, all those thirty when they first cast in their lot with David, were weak enough; but then by association with him, they caught his spirit, every one of them. Hence compare what is said of them as in the cave Adullam (1st Sam. xxii.), with the record of the position they attained in 2nd Sam. xxiii. 24. So should we so wax bold in following Him, as to go on with Him in the three after years of His arduous ministry. The double three of David's chiefs of the mighty ones may admonish us of the difficulty or of the variety in our service in following Him. So likewise in this 7th verse of ch. iii., to these sixty valiant men out of the valiant

of Israel, or doubly valiant,* God make us, like them, expert in war. Yea, God keep us from ever forgetting that till we get to our rest at home we are in an enemy's country, whose Prince and God is Satan, and that our only sword with which to cope with him is God's own word. And because the present time is one long, weary night, the more must we heed that word. By it shall we be kept from loving the world. By it shall our eyes be enabled to see, notwithstanding the dense darkness, the emptiness of the world's religions many: the worse, the more of Christianity there is in them.

But now in verse 9 mention is made of another resting-place of this Bridegroom. Again, unfortunately, the word is badly rendered "chariot," and by the incorrect translation of each of these words, first "bed" and then "chariot," exactly the contrary idea is conveyed to what by the varied language in the Hebrew it is designed to symbolize. For it is the latter term in the authorized version which suggests the idea of motion, and yet which the former one, still in the same version, does not. But here, the marginal reading, which is far preferable, comes to the help of the English reader. For there, instead of "chariot" we have "bed". Now this confusion of thought, evident by the substitution of "bed" for chariot in verse 9, conjoined with the fact that the word "bed" in verse 7 is quite a different Hebrew word and must therefore have been intended to stand for a different thing; all this betrays that our translators were at a loss how to interpret the two diverse expressions. But the clue becomes easy to find when the former term is rendered "palanquin," or travelling litter, in verse 7, as the Tabernacle was, and the other, "bed," for complete rest, as the Temple in type depicted. And to confirm this interpretation, observe how verse 8 explains verse 7 in its reference to the time of David when the temple was not built; and again how verse 10 corroborates the suggestion that the bed of verse 9 is the Temple, with its pillars and its flooring, its purple and silver and gold. And then, further, the comparison of the Bride's present portion in the Lord's presence and

* Some refer this number of "sixty" to those around the Tabernacle of old. These were in round numbers, "six hundred thousand men," and the sixty are supposed to represent the ten thousands of Israel (See Num. ii. 2). A more pertinent passage to cite would be Ezekiel xli. 6, where the threes and the thirty are seen to have their place in the future earthly temple of God. Likewise with the overcomers now (Rev. iii. 12) in the heavenlies.

companionship throughout her wilderness journey towards Canaan, and then of her bright and ever brightening prospect of being ultimately brought into His eternal rest yonder:—the former to the Tabernacle, now in one spot of this dreary world and then in another, and the latter to the Temple, exhibiting that then only can God rest, when all His promises have been fulfilled, and all His purposes in Christ accomplished: surely all this, as it becomes thus distinctly the sense of the passage, is seen to be very beautiful and also very consolatory.

Probably it may interest and be helpful to some if we trace out here with some distinctness, the difference of teaching afforded us in the Word, between the Ark as it was in the Tabernacle and the Ark as it finally rested in the Temple. For instance, in the former case it stood on the sands of the desert; in the latter, the floor underneath it was of pure gold. So likewise in the Tabernacle, the staves remained constantly in the rings of the Ark; in the Temple they were drawn out. The Holy Ghost in all this surely signifying that whilst the people of God remain a pilgrim people, He also Himself is a Pilgrim with them. (Compare Is. lxiii. verse 9). Thirdly, in the Tabernacle, there were "the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded," memorials of wilderness grace and wilderness failure, and the latter also a testimony *against* the rebels (Num. xvii.); but in the Temple, there was the Law only. For grace and mercy will ever rest, and rest only upon righteousness. Fourthly, in the Tabernacle the cherubim looked in towards the Mercy-Seat;* but in the Temple they looked out and could see the glory filling the land. When righteousness reigns, the symbols of God's power can look outward in blessing. Previously when there was nothing but the Covenant, their gaze was limited to it; but when God's throne is established in righteousness, then can the world be blessed according to that righteousness. Fifthly, in the Tabernacle the cherubim fitted the Ark, or its Lid, the Mercy-Seat; in the Temple their wings touched the walls of the house.† For in glory we judge angels and the world. Sixthly; we

* The beautiful and significant type of the cherubim bending over the Mercy-Seat I have explained in my Lectures on the Revelation, Vol. I. p. 91.

† The marginal reading of 2nd Chronicles iii. 13 is to be preferred: "their faces were toward the house" (And see verse 12 before).

read far more of musicians and of singers in regard to the Temple than we do in connection with the Tabernacle. Seventhly, in the Temple there were two Pillars, of which the name of that on the right hand was Jachin and the name of that on the other was Boaz. The meaning of the former word is: He will establish, and of the latter, In Him is strength—that is to say, I will do it and I will keep it. And what shall I more say? Enough has been already indicated to encourage the reader to trace out for himself the endless variety of thought and of divine purpose in the difference of construction of the Temple contrasted with the Tabernacle. Then, here in this precious Song we are carried along further, for we here read that the pillars thereof are of silver, grace resting on redeeming blood. Again “the bottom of it is of gold,” thus aptly coinciding with the account of the Temple in Chronicles, and again with the city in the Revelation xxi. 21. In fact one cannot but be struck with the narrative in Chronicles as to the amount of gold used by Solomon in the building of the Temple. And when one recalls to mind of what all this gold everywhere about it, is a type, that the *divine character* of the work in the heavenly temple and city shines out resplendently from every part thereof—divine energy, not in coping with and obliterating all traces of our sin, for that in Scripture type is represented by brass or copper; but by the same divine energy and love and holiness, God having His own way and achieving His own eternal purpose of first building a living house worthy of His habitation and then resting in His love with us for ever. And yet withal ’tis “purple,” ’tis still humanity is this temple of His, albeit it is glorified humanity. No wonder that this Temple is emphatically said to be built by Solomon “Himself” and for “Himself”. But all is “paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem”.

Therefore appropriately a cry is heard directing the daughters of Zion to go out to behold king Solomon, similar to the cry to the virgins to go out to meet the Coming Bridegroom in Matt. xxv. For surely such love as His demands some response on our part. And according to Scripture everywhere and to this Song in particular, as we have already abundantly seen, this is what he asks of our hearts. And mark that the day of His marriage with those virgin souls found to be true believers responding to His grace and united into one chaste and holy Bride by His Spirit,—this is the day of the gladness of HIS heart. (Zeph. iii. 17.)

She, and the believers brought home, may rejoice, indeed, as much as they like: still He is more pleased than they. He will with exceeding joy to Himself present us faultless before the presence of His glory. ’Tis in this most blessed way that the word of God closes (Jude 21), if we except the book of the Revelation, which is the book of judgment. And what is that last book of Scripture in brief an account of, but of the putting of the crown upon the right Head. Yea, even now do we gladly behold His glory; do we gladly sing the song, “Crown Him Lord of All”!

THE WAY OF THE LOVE OF JESUS.

THE more perfect *love* is, the more entirely and without distraction will it regard its object, and this will give it at different times a very different bearing, because its way will be determined by the condition and need of its object. Its way therefore, at times, may appear harsh and decisive, as when the Lord rebuked Peter in Matt. xvi., or when He reproved the two disciples in Luke xxiv. But this is only because love is perfect, and therefore is undistractedly considering its object.

Imperfect love will show itself otherwise—more attractively at times, but far far intrinsically less true, because imperfect love will not in this way unmixedly consider its object, but *itself*—it will be set upon *enjoying* its object, rather than *seeing* it, and this will give it a more considerate and tender bearing at times, and get for itself great credit, whilst perfect love has all the while forgotten itself and its enjoyments, and ordered its course and its actings in more undistracted concern and desire to have others blest and profited.

Where do we see the perfect love but in Jesus, in God! A mother has it not, but will at times *enjoy* her child, but Jesus had it—He considered His disciples when He was with them—He ordered His way with them to *their* profit, and not to His own gratification. He will gratify Himself with them in that coming age, when He need no longer care for them as in a place of instruction and discipline. He will then have no occasion in the exercise of perfect love to consider only their profit, for their profit will have been brought to its accomplishment in that place of their Lord’s delight in them.

J. G. B.

**BAPTISMAL TRUTH,
OR, THE TESTIMONY OF ALL BAPTISMS.**

By M. T. BOSWELL.

Continued from January Number.

TO resume the thread of my subject—I repeat that the hour is now come when man himself must die on account of sin. The inflexible justice of God demands the death of man. The blood of bulls and of goats can never take away sin—without shedding of blood there is no remission. The ancient economy passes away as weak and unprofitable. The kingdom of God draws nigh, the King of Israel is proclaimed by John Baptist, as the one who shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. (Matt. iii. 12.) How shall man escape the wrath to come? (Matt. iii. 7.) By submitting to the righteousness of God, because the God of justice is also the God of mercy. (Rom. x. 2-3.) Consequently the publicans and sinners, who did not stay themselves on their own righteousness, submit to the righteousness of God and are baptized by John, even as the great example of His people, Himself, submitted to this baptism, saying, “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness”. (Matt. iii. 15.) Notice the word *us*, identifying the Lord in the death of his people, and the people in the death of their Lord. (Rom. vi.) The people pass through the water the shadow of death, and God is justified; but there could be nothing meritorious in this act before God, seeing that it was but the act of a sinner dying in type or figure for his own sins. No voice from heaven approves this act as a sweet odour of death unto God, nor the act of coming out of the water as a sweet odour of life. I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, and none the more in the death of the sinner, saith the Lord. There is but one in the death of whom God can find delight, namely, He of whom the prophet testifieth, that it pleased the Lord to bruise him. (Isaiah liii. 10.) Behold this one fulfilling all righteousness in submitting to the baptism of John; behold Him of His own free will plunged in the river of judgment, shadow of the baptism of the cross and of the judgment of Calvary (Luke xii. 50), the which He must suffer in stead and place of the sinner; behold him rising from the water in figure of resurrection, while a voice from heaven proclaims—“Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,”

and the Holy Spirit descends as a dove and abide upon him! Reader, behold this willing act of obedience on the part of the Son of God. Contemplate the joy of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit on the occasion of an act which was but the prelude to a deeper and more effectual submission to the will of God, even the baptism of the cross of Calvary, where verily He presents Himself unto God as a sweet odour of death in His death, and a sweet odour of life in His resurrection.

Dear Reader, contemplate this act, and may God give you to understand it, and beware that you be not the victim of some counterfeit of baptism, but see to it that you have submitted from the heart to the baptism that is to say (need I now add), to the immersion under water in the name of the Lord Jesus. Dear Reader if you do not obey, are you indeed His disciple? Do not seek to excuse yourself in pleading the example of other persons. What did Jesus do? If now the light upon this doctrine has reached you, you are guilty before God if you turn from it. It is only in the path of obedience you can *reckon* on the fulfilment of the promise—he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark xvi. 16). Who can tell how much the Church of God has lost through neglecting and perverting this commandment of the Lord? It is my prayer, Reader, that you obey and walk in future more and more in the truth of baptism and in the newness of life. (Rom. vi. 4).

As the blood of bulls and of goats bare testimony to the justice of God, which, however, could never have been satisfied by their blood, and set off the value of the blood of that one Lamb of God, which alone could satisfy His justice and take away sin; likewise, also the baptism of the people of Israel in figure of death testified to the righteous requirements of God, yet not being approved by Him by any voice from heaven, it served but to render more striking the baptism of Him who in submitting to it was on the way to fulfil all righteousness, and who received from heaven the approbation of His Father, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost and of power. See Acts x. 38, and observe how Peter links the title of shame—Jesus of Nazareth, with the baptism of John in the 37th verse, and then follows the anointing of the Holy Spirit and of power in the 38th verse. Here, again, we see baptism by John connected with the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. (1 Pet. i. 11). Thus this baptism

of the people of Israel, as also, that of Jesus Himself, bare witness to the Son of God. That He might be made manifest to Israel, therefore, said John Baptist, and I come baptizing with water.

Dear Reader, is it possible that you can have read thus far without seeing something of the beauty and of the power of this divine ordinance of the baptism of John, full of meaning, which spake to the consciences and the hearts of a nation? Allow me to ask you if you do now seriously believe that the sprinkling of a new-born child is indeed an ordinance of God, and that as such, it bears the same testimony to Jesus Christ? Can the sprinkling of one such infant or of ten thousand of them speak to the consciences of sinners who may witness it or direct their thoughts toward the Saviour? We have seen how the true ordinance was a powerful means for accomplishing the purposes of God, and the author of this little treatise could well add, that more than one sinner of the present day has been converted in being a spectator of a baptism, according to Christ, of a believer; and it is no marvel, for the same spirit is all-powerful to employ a similar ordinance to-day, for accomplishing the purposes of God, as he did in the days of John the Baptist.

In the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we read that John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who should come after, that is, on Jesus Christ. Thus those who had been baptized by John were marked out by this act as being his disciples and listening to his instructions, until He of whom John spake was come, and then they followed Jesus. John Baptist himself not only approved this act of his disciples, but also rejoiced in it, saying, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom". This remarkable expression indicated that there was a union between Christ and His true disciples, much closer and more intimate than that which had hitherto existed between God and the people of Israel. They are not the children of Abraham after the flesh who were heirs of the Promise, but his seed according to the Spirit, namely, those who have received the testimony of Jesus Christ and follow Him as His disciples. This truth, that is to say, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," now shone forth more and more distinctly. As a nation Israel had not received the baptism of John. Her leaders, the Pharisees and the lawyers, had rejected it. (Luke vii. 30.) Consequently

the baptism by Jesus Christ administered by the hands of his disciples in the days of his flesh, has a character rather individual than national. If the nation of Israel had received the witness of John and Him of whom John witnessed, a whole nation had been born in a day, and the kingdom of God had not been taken from them. (Matt. xxi. 43.) But in the long-suffering of God this rebellious nation is not yet set aside, and Jesus, the Son of God, full of grace and truth, following the example of John Baptist, preaches the kingdom of God, and makes and baptizes disciples (John iii. 23, and chap. iv. 1), not limiting his baptism to those who had been fully converted, but on the contrary, baptizing all who came to him. (John iii. 26).

Again, I repeat that the baptism of Israel was a baptism proclaimed to the people of God, according to the flesh, and the testimony of John directed the eyes toward Him, upon whom even His people after the flesh could fix their national eyes. Now I believe that my readers will easily understand how such a baptism, whether by John or Jesus Himself, may have been received by many persons, who were not true disciples, as indeed we read afterwards, that many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. (John vi. 66.) Also, it is easy to understand that, the testimony of John and that of Jesus, being both of them testimonies to Him who was walking visibly before the eyes of His people, even an unconverted man without any change of heart might receive this testimony so far as to become a professing disciple of Jesus, as was Judas Iscariot.

If I were to anticipate upon the subject, I might remark here, that the baptism of the present time in the name of the Lord Jesus ought never to be received, without the sinner having first received the testimony of the Holy Spirit, concerning the resurrection from among the dead of the Son of God (Rom. i. 4); and this testimony is of such a spiritual character, that is to say, a testimony which does not appeal to the natural eyes, that no sinner can either see or receive it, except by the Holy Spirit. Consequently, he who receives in this day the testimony of the Holy Spirit becomes for ever the disciple of the Lord Jesus, and is bound to submit to the baptism in His name, in order to learn in the path of obedience the power of this deep doctrine, and to walk in newness of life.

I would wish to make my readers understand very distinctly the shade of difference between the baptisms

by John and Jesus Christ, and that of the present day. In the case of the former, all the nation of Israel was invited according to the will of God to submit to it. At first, nearly the whole nation went to be baptized, but the faithful warnings of John unmasked hypocrisy and diminished the number of those who otherwise had submitted to his baptism. Again, still more in the case of the baptism by Jesus, although, at first, all went unto Him to be baptized, and, indeed, He made and baptized more disciples than John, (although He Himself baptized not, but the disciples), yet the number of these disciples gradually diminished, and finally this baptism by Jesus would seem not to have taken place, except in the case of His true disciples. (John iii. 26, and chap. iv. 1, 2.) Thus we see how these two baptisms by John and by Jesus pass almost imperceptibly to the baptism of this present time. As the preaching of the kingdom of God by Jesus Christ became more and more limited in its scope, being proclaimed to the ears and to the hearts of but a little number, so His baptism assumed more and more an individual character. To-day, indeed, baptism is a matter exclusively individual, which always *follows* the reception of the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God is not now preached to any nation exclusively, as in the case of Israel, to bring them as a *nation* to Himself, but it is preached in its spiritual bearing to sinners of all nations, to gather out of them a people unto Himself (Acts xv. 14), who may thus become God's peculiar people, a holy nation, to shew forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Pet. ii. 9).

(To be continued in our next if the Lord will.)

CONVERSATION.

IN Andrew Fuller's diary is the following entry, Jan. 3rd, 1772:—

"This afternoon being on a visit, as I stepped aside from the company, I overheard one of them remark, 'I love Mr. Fuller's company; it is so *diverting*'. This expression moved me much. Oh, wretch that I am, is this to have my speech seasoned with grace? O Lord, forgive me some humbling thoughts for the above in Prayer. 4th. Tender this morning in remembering the above circumstance. Lord, make me more spiritual in time to come."

"GO UP TO THE MOUNTAIN."

HAGGAI i. 8.

THE secret of blessing is in being occupied with what concerns God. When Israel came back from captivity under Zerubbabel, difficulties arose about the building of the Lord's house, as we read in Ezra iv. But difficulties test our reality. Israel succumbed to the difficulties of their circumstance and said, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built". So now, difficulties often prove hindrances when they should be but occasions for faith to draw near and lay hold of God.

Difficulties tell us where our hearts are. The Lord showed to Israel that their hearts were set on their own things; for every man ran *for* (not unto, rather about what concerned) his own house. Thus when they proved and found wanting, and the result was that they sowed much and brought in little; they ate but were not satisfied; they drank, but were not filled; they clothed themselves, but were not warm.

Is it not so now in the spiritual life of the Church of God? Much yields little; much work brings in small results; and souls are conscious that they are neither satisfied nor warmed. We ask, Why is this? God replies, it is because His house lies waste, and every one cares for his own, and not for the things of Jesus Christ. He calls upon all to "consider" (or set their heart upon) "their ways". Then comes the command, "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood and build my house".

Through the Lord's mercy we hear of believers here and there awakening to the summons, and beloved labourers are starting for the mountain to cut down wood, and to dig out stones from the quarries; and let us speed them with our prayers, and help them with our means, and comfort them with our sympathy. May we thus all be found fellow-helpers of the truth.

There are beams that must come from the forests of India and China, and stones costly and great that have to be dug out of the quarries of Italy and Spain. There are elect ones everywhere to be gathered in, and we need, God needs, faithful men who are content to say with Paul, "I endure all things for the elect sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Tim. ii. 10)

There are those who have to go into a desert place to find one soul, leaving the many-peopled city, like

Philip, to find one anxious stranger who has no one to teach him. The labour, the long journey, were not in vain—"the elect's sake" made it needful—and a lifetime may be needed to win such a trophy; and he will have a double "well done" who thus toils in the footsteps of the Son of God, content to rejoice in spirit, and say, "I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight," yes even so, though Chorazin and Bethsaida repent not, and Capernaum be brought down to hell. God had been glorified, though but one poor lonely sinner had heard the invitation, "Come unto Me"; and having accepted it, came and found the Blessed One in Simon the Pharisee's house (compare Matthew xi. with Luke vii. 19-50), and there received from His own lips those precious, priceless words, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace".

Let us not think, if after much toil one be gathered in, that it is *only* one; that *one* was needed, and the guest-table would have had one place vacant if that one had not come in. We have to seek out and to find God's jewels, and all must be gathered in before the Lord can respond to our cry, "Lord Jesus, come quickly".

So again we beseech the saints of God to help all who are going to the mountain in distant lands, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

THE POSSESSION OF THE SPIRIT.

NOTE NO. I.

IT is the plain teaching of Scripture, that the Holy Spirit dwells and abides with every one who believes in the Lord Jesus. His own promise was—"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." (John xvi. 7.) This time, then, in which we live, is the Dispensation of the Spirit. The Spirit awakens, arouses, convicts, and saves, rules, guides, instructs, and keeps unto salvation. This truth is not commonly received. It is not sufficiently recognised. Yet, there is nothing more plainly taught in the word of God. It may indeed be well described as a *strange anomaly* that Christians, who profess to accept that word as absolute truth should so seriously overlook this truth, plainly taught in its pages. That it is

neglected is very manifest. You have only to listen to the prayers offered up at many meetings of professing Christians to see—nay to have it forced on your attention, that they are not conscious of the great and divine gift which the Lord has bestowed on them. There is no want of pious sentiment in those referred to. It is the non-recognition of plain truth in which they are at fault. The truth has been lost. How frequently do you hear the most earnest cry for the gift of the Spirit!—a thing the Christian does not need to pray for; because if he is a Christian at all, the Spirit is already given to him, and that cry itself—ill informed though it be—is prompted by the Spirit, who if his grace were acknowledged would lead into all truth. I appeal to the experience of many of my readers who have been led by the Spirit to put their trust in the Lord Jesus, if they do not quite unwittingly fall into this error. Many are unconscious of it. They do not sufficiently attend to what is written, or do not accept what the word says with simplicity of heart. The error may arise from false education—from erroneous examples—from poor notions of the Christian's position and privileges—from insufficient recognition of what the Lord has obtained for us through the sacrifice of His blood, or what He has given or is willing to give from His unlimited grace.

Again, when it is said that this is pre-eminently the Dispensation of the Spirit, it is not meant that the Holy Spirit was absent from the world prior to the time when the Lord Jesus offered up the sacrifice of himself. No! The Holy Spirit has always influenced or sought to influence men, even from the beginning. But until Christ came and had finished the work of salvation and had ascended up on high, the Holy Spirit was given in fulness only to rare and chosen individuals and for particular or special work—such as to the prophets, and those men of God who were raised up for the government of His people, or other mission to and among men. But now—in our time—the Holy Spirit, blessed be God! rules in and over all who believe. He is the common possession of God's true church in the earth; and every individual Christian has this sacred inalienable and blood-bought, but at the same time, in one sense, awful privilege of being the abiding place of God's Holy Spirit. Ah! what care—what anxiety—what responsibility—what fear—should not this produce within us, lest we walk unworthy of our profession or go astray into sin! True it is that in old time

"holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21); but it is equally true that here, now, in our own day, every child of God—through belief of the truth as it is in Jesus—is possessed of and moved by the Holy Spirit—the third person in the Divine Trinity!

Some will ask if this is indeed truth we are speaking. It is indeed. The verse first quoted is strong evidence. Its related passages are stronger still. In a previous part of his address, the Lord Jesus had said "When the Comforter is come—whom I will send unto you from the Father—even the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." (John xv. 26) You observe the promise, "I will send unto you from the Father"; implying that Jesus has power to send; and you will observe the source—it is "from the Father". So that we have here complete union—one-ness of being, with three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit. Then again the Lord says in another part of his address—"Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth is come—he will guide you into all truth". (John xvi. 13.) At first, he was to send Him; and send Him from the Father. Now this being over, "When He is come"—what follows?—"He will guide you into all truth". He will shew the truth to the waiting heart; he will open the seeing eye. He will be your guide—operating in your hearts and minds—acting on your intelligence, so that you may perceive—stirring up your affections, so that you may receive that precious possession—the truth. "He will guide you into all truth," "for he shall not speak of or from Himself"—says Jesus—"but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall he speak, and He will shew you things to come." "He shall glorify me." What is that but to lead human hearts to see and know the Lord Jesus as God and Saviour? "He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that He (the Holy Spirit of truth) shall take of mine (and which is the Father's also) and shall shew it unto you."

Dear reader—have you indeed received the Holy Spirit? Have you yielded yourself to His grace and influence? Have you been taught by Him through the word? Consider these questions. Honour Him by your surrender and submission—entire and complete, reserving nothing; by your obedient work and service

—diligent and painstaking, withholding nothing. Oh! how careful we should be lest we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom we were sealed unto the day of redemption, or quench His precious influence in our hearts! May the God of peace Himself sanctify us wholly; and preserve our whole spirit and soul and body, blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. S.

SERVICE ITS ELEMENTS AND SPHERE.

FEW words are in more constant use than the word service. It is a simple, yet comprehensive word. The natural mind and heart cannot rightly view, nor duly estimate service to Christ, and even believers are daily learning its meaning and value.

Viewed from a worldly stand-point, service is depreciated, sometimes despised, but the Word of God, as also the Son of God, dignify it.

We need only read the Epistles in order to see the honourable nature, while the fact of the Son of God taking upon Himself the form of a servant, and describing Himself as a serving one among His disciples stamps it with untold dignity.

Service is the sure path to honour, and he who desires to rise to the highest point of honour, must go lowest in service. Note the Master's words when He checked the lofty thoughts and aspiring spirits of His disciples, "Whosoever *will* be *great* among you, *let* him be your (Diakonos) servant, and whosoever of you *will* be *chiefest*, shall be (Doulos) bond-servant of all". (Mark x. 43, 44.)

The true dignity and full reward of service will not be known until the Lord our Master shall arise. "He shall give to every man according as his work shall be." In enumerating essentials of service, I need scarcely say that *life*, spiritual life, is the first. If in nature a dead man cannot serve, no more can a man dead in sin (albeit he may be full of religious activity) serve Christ. The Master was and is the chief servant, and He is the Son of God. The Son in service; even so, before any one can be Christ's servant he must be, by regeneration a child of God. Sons in service alone are acknowledged by the Master, Christ.

The term servant in Scripture, implies entire possession and surrender: possession on the part of the

Master, on the servant's part surrender, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your body and your spirit which are His".

Both these are true; Christ hath purchased and claimed us, and we by grace have surrendered ourselves to Him—we call Him Master and Lord. This full *surrender* is, I judge, another pre-requisite for service. In 2 Tim. ii., 3, 4, Paul represents the soldier, the king's servant, as disentangled from all, comparatively at least, indifferent to all that is personally dear, even his own life, in order that he may do the *one* thing, viz., please him who has chosen him to be a soldier, to whom he has surrendered himself.

This full surrender on the part of Christ's servant, this affection, whole-heartedness for Him, and ardour to do His will must nevertheless be accompanied by another qualification, *subjection*. This is taught in verse 5 of the passage quoted above. Paul changing the figure says, "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully," i.e., *subject* to the rules of the contest. So also we as the servants of Christ should ever consult the will of our Master, and bow to it. He has bought us for Himself, and undertaken to care for and direct us, He has also given us His rules for service; let us then, beloved fellow-servants, be very careful to serve according to these, according to His revealed will, in *subjection* to His Word. Seek to serve in wisdom as well as with affection, truthfully as well as fervently, more careful (as others have said) as to the quality of service, than its quantity, remembering also, that although service is a present thing, and that God may *show* us present results, yet our service is done in faith, and we serve chiefly for the day of Christ for which also we live and suffer. Hence the need of *patience* or endurance, another principle of service. This also is illustrated in the same passage in Timothy, verse 6. The Apostle teaches us, that in order to partake of the fruit, the husbandman must *first* labour. James also tells us, that the husbandman hath long patience until he receive the early and the latter rain; then applying it says, "Be ye also patient, 'stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh". Other passages might be quoted, but my readers will find it profitable to search them out. Another reason for patience is the deadly opposition which we must needs encounter from Satan direct, or through his agents in the world, and even in the flesh of fellow-Christians. He hates the

servants, and sets himself in deadly opposition to every element of their service, ever seeking to act on the opposite evil in their flesh, and thus to hinder the manifestation of the grace. This he does with craft and force, aiming at the state of our hearts, seeking to unfit us for our service, hence our difficulties; but let us not faint, but remember that greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world, that in the strength of the Lord, with the whole armour of God and the power of His might we can meet him and conquer. Christ has conquered for us, and will overcome *in* and *by* us; yet let us remember that He who has determined the *end* has also appointed the *means*. Therefore let us *watch* and *pray*; be sober and vigilant, because our adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth abroad for mischief; let us by steadfastness in the faith resist him. Yes, resist him, we are never told to flee from Satan, but to resist him. Sinners are to flee for refuge to Christ, and young men are bidden flee youthful lusts, desires (specially necessary), in those days, but we are to stand our ground against Satan, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you". May it ever be thus with us.

A word in conclusion with reference to the sphere or spheres of service. We are in danger of defining too sharply, drawing the line too markedly between things called secular and things spiritual, and so get into bondage with regard to our daily duties, whether in the house or in the field, in the office or the shop. Surely everything done in connection with which spiritual life, love, surrender, subjection and patience can, and ought to be exercised and developed, is an act of service. Truly there is a service in the Gospel to the world, and service to Christ among believers which may be called direct spiritual service, but it is also true, that any and everything that can be done to the Lord (and such things alone should believers do) as service, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him".

Space forbids my enlarging, but allows of a brotherly suggestion to my readers, viz., to search out, read, and pray over the passages of God's Word which treat of service, and then seek grace to act on them. H. W.

It is one thing to be blameless before men, and another to be aiming at that perfect obedience which Christ rendered to the Father: "I do always those things that please Him". R. C. C.

FORGIVEN AND FORGOTTEN.

MAN says he can forgive, but cannot forget. Not so with God. He can forgive, and forget too. And surely this is a wonderful thought for the doubting soul. To believe God, to receive His testimony, to set to our seal that He is true, is to have our sins forgiven and forgotten, for ever. And the word of God asserts it: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more". (Heb. x. 17.)

Now all true believers are spoken of in this very precious verse. They not only have the right to *know* that their sins are forgiven, but that they are also *forgotten*. They have been so perfectly put away, that the mind of God is not henceforth charged with them. They have been borne by the Divine scape-goat into a land not inhabited—the land of forgetfulness—eternal oblivion. (Lev. xvi. 20-22.) God has blotted them out; He has cast them for ever behind His back; they are lost in the depth of the sea. Every figure is used by God to express how completely the believer's sins have been met and put away out of His sight.

But how could God speak thus? The simple answer is that Jesus has died and bare in His own body *all* the sins of His people; and as this Divine scape-goat He has borne them away into the land of eternal forgetfulness. They are lost, and can rise no more against those whose sins they were. Blessed thought! "Jesus died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and was buried and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures". (1 Cor. xx. 3, 4). This is the answer to the question, "How can a holy God act thus with the believing sinner?"

Now, what perfect peace this affords; what repose this imparts to the soul! To know one's sins to be forgiven and forgotten, must fill us with "joy and peace in believing". Especially when we know they have been atoned for, and borne away out of God's sight for ever, by the precious sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. All is divinely and righteously done, and Christ is now in glory. What about us who *have* believed? It is ours to enjoy the fact, to rejoice in the truth of what God says. Does He say, He gave His Son to die for sinners, and consequently for *me*? Then I am to rejoice in it. Does he say that Jesus bare my sins in His own body on the tree? Then I am to rejoice in the fact that he did. Does He say that Jesus is raised from the dead and crowned with glory and honour at

His own right hand? Then I am to rejoice that done—done as God would have it done—done eternal satisfaction and glory. Does He say that a believer in the Lord Jesus am pardoned, justified, accepted, and saved? He does most undoubtedly. What then remains for me to do? Simply to rejoice in it.

All this is very simple and blessed, is it not, reader? To rely upon what God says in His word have assurance that we are pardoned and saved. A young lady said some time ago, "Thus, I am to it simply because God says so". My answer was, just so".

This must ever be the ground of assurance in my works, but the word of God; not my feelings, but the word of God; not myself at all, but the word of God. That word in the power of the Holy Ghost is witness to the infinite efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ—tells out God's thoughts and appreciation of the work of His dear Son, and shows how right He is in pardoning and justifying the ungodly who believe. "It declares His righteousness, that He be just, and the justifier of Him which believe in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.)

Here is the secret of the enjoyment of peace. We rest in Christ who has accomplished a work by which He is glorified about sin. The believer rests in Christ. He does—in Christ. God has expressed His joy and satisfaction in the work of His Son in raising Him from the dead and giving Him glory. We rest in the expression of divine delight and satisfaction. The infinite height of divine glory to which Christ has ascended, expresses God's estimate of the work of the blessed Lord Jesus on the cross. We rest in the finished work. What must be the result? Sweet and calm peace. Standing in God's favour we can think of holiness and give thanks. Nothing can disturb our peace. It is peace founded on the Divine estimate of the sacrifice of Christ. We repose there, and respect to the question of sin, death, and judgment, nothing can disturb our repose. Blessed the Happy people! Happy portion!

What follows? A life of self-surrender, of devotion and of consecration to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. To live no longer to ourselves, but to another—even our adorable, risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

THE ALTAR WHEREOF WE EAT.

Heb. xiii. 10.

PART FIRST.

THE Apostle in 1 Cor. x. 18 asks the question, "Are not they which eat of the sacrifices *partakers of the Altar*?" And this identification of the sacrifices with the altar is seen too in Matt. xxiii. 20, "Whosoever shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it and by all things thereon"; and in Hosea viii. 2, "Because Ephraim hath made altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin". It is in the light of such texts that we can understand the words in Heb. xiii. 10 "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle".

What then is that altar, or sacrifice, of which the priests of the old dispensation had no right to eat? The grant to them, "by reason of the anointing," was very large from various offerings, but there were exceptions. Of course they had no part of the burnt-offerings which were ever ascending upon the altar, "an offering and a sweet-smelling savour" to Jehovah, denoting and figuring the entire devotedness of Him who offered Himself without spot to God, and the ever-enduring fragrance of that consecration. They had no exclusive right to the peace-offering. And there was a special provision as to some offerings, because they were characteristically "most holy". (Num. xviii. 9, 10.) They were to be eaten in the most holy place by the males only. "This shall be thine of the most holy things reserved from the fire. Every oblation of theirs, every meat-offering of theirs, and every sin-offering of theirs, and every trespass-offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. In the most holy place shalt thou eat it. Every male shall eat it; it shall be holy unto thee." There was much that the sons and daughters might alike feed on, and in their own dwellings. But offerings of the special kind described—the meal-offering, the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering—were regarded as the special food of the priests to be eaten in the Holy Place. (See also Lev. vi. 14-18.) But besides these laws there was one memorable and significant reservation in respect of that sacrifice of sin-offering, of which the blood was carried within the veil. This was the grand distinguishing sacrifice on the great day of atonement, as we read in Lev. xvi. The terms

of this particular law are found in Lev. vi. 30. "No sin-offering whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place shall be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire."

When Nadab and Abihu died after the appointed sacrifice had been offered upon the consecration of the priests, we find that Moses diligently sought for the goat of the sin-offering, and beheld it was burnt, and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying, "wherefore have ye not eaten the sin-offering in the holy place seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement before the Lord. Behold the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place; ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place as I commanded." (Lev. x. 16-18.) It was as much the high privilege of the priests to eat the ordinary sin-offerings as it was their duty to abstain from eating any part of that special sin-offering of which the blood was taken within the veil by the High Priest according to Lev. xvi.; and whenever faith unfolded to them the full meaning of sin-offerings in general, they must have known the peculiar sanctity of all the food which such offerings supplied to them, and the fitness of the ordinance that it should be eaten in the Holy place, and in that place alone. We cannot tell the extent to which their minds were enlightened as to the distinctive meaning of the various offerings; but no devout priest searching into the meaning of the ordinances which the Spirit of the Lord had given with such exactness, and so elaborately, in the Book of Leviticus, could fail to mark the special character of the sin-offering. "Every one that toucheth it shall be holy." (Lev. vi. 18.) What could participation of the priests in such food (as they fed on it in peace in the holy place) imply? Were they not consciously brought near by the blood which had been shed? And then, as they thought that there was one solemn occasion on which a sin-offering was presented with a special provision that not even the priests should have any part of it; when the great day of atonement periodically came round, and that occasion arose, and the special sin-offering of that day was burned outside the camp without any of the priests being permitted to take any share of it; and when they considered the reason of this, namely, that its blood had been taken by the High Priest within the veil, what depths of

undiscovered meaning must have been shadowed to their souls!

It was not consistent with the purpose and character of that dispensation that the prohibition should be removed. The veil in front of the Holy of Holies taught the lesson of which the Apostle speaks in Heb. ix. 8: "The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest". The sin-offering in its ordinary course had its proper effect, as we read in Lev. iv. The offerer came with it, with the confession of his sin, and when the sacrifice was offered the sin was forgiven. To feed on that through which sin was forgiven was the highest honour of the priests. And to this extent every true worshipper might be enlightened. He might know that his sin for which he had offered his sin-offering was really forgiven, and that the priests in the holy place were feeding on that which had satisfied God. But on the day of Atonement the great ceremony of the High Priest taking the blood of the sin-offering within the veil typified something more than the forgiveness of a particular offence, and the enjoyment of a temporary fellowship with God. It spoke of sin being fully and finally put away—"sin condemned in the flesh"—of an end of all offerings, once for all, and therefore only, as the Apostle says, it spoke of "boldness to enter into the holiest". The type was imperfect, as every type of such a glorious and transcendent truth must have been. It exhibited an earthly High Priest, himself full of infirmity entering within the veil once a-year with sacrifices which could never take away sin, so as to make the offerer perfect as pertaining to the conscience. And yet there was in it a wonderful picture of accomplished redemption, with its rich and necessary consequences. It pointed to the moment when the veil should be rent, and entrance should be manifested by a new and living way to the Mercy Seat. But of that time the law with its shadows could not give, even to the most devout worshipper, anything but the most feeble conception. David might know the blessedness of the man whose transgressions were forgiven, and whose sin was covered, and to whom the Lord would not impute iniquity; but who could have foreseen the day in which a body of saints, gathered from Jews and Gentiles alike, should be made priests to God, and in the fulness of a calm experience of acceptance in the Beloved, with a true heart, in the full assurance of faith, should feed on a

sin-offering which had made them clean every whit, complete, perfect, and in truth and reality, one with the Son of God, who had taken the sinner's place, and then had entered into the heavens themselves with His own blood as Head and Representative of His redeemed people? The contrast in Heb. xiii. 10 is between our high and wonderful privilege in this access into the holiest, with its accompanying satisfaction and rest of heart, in the presence of the God of Peace, and the limited privilege of those who served the tabernacle. Theirs was a ministration which was glorious, for it was full of shadows of good things to come, but our ministration is "still more glorious". "That which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, the reason of the glory which excelleth." Great as the privilege of the priests was, as they fed on the sin-offering in the Holy Place, relatively it had scarce any glory at all.

That the Apostle in Heb. xiii. is alluding distinctly to the one altar or sacrifice of which we have spoken seems clear from the context: "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin (which was the special ordinance of the day of Atonement) was burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the camp. Let us go forth therefore unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach." It is by His precious work—the reality of that which was typified on the day of Atonement—that we now have access into the Holy of Holies. He entered in there once, having obtained eternal redemption. That was the antitype of the High Priest's action in Lev. xvi. Moreover, He suffered without the gate, as made a curse, bearing the whole weight of guilt, Himself taking the place once for all, of all the many offerings which could never settle the question of sin; and in doing this He glorified God, and fulfilled His will. "By the which will we are (literally, have been) sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." That was the work of obedience by which many were made righteous (Rom. v. 19), by which our sanctification was accomplished. Now being sanctified we have fitness for the Holy of Holies, there can be no barrier to our access; and having access there, faith finds the nourishment of the soul in the flesh and blood of Him who died for us, and this is "meat indeed". M. W.

ON LUKE xii. 32-48.

OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. J. G. BELLET,
7th SEPTEMBER, 1852.

part of the answer of the Lord to the application made to him in the 13th verse; the application not unrighteous, but observe the Lord's Who made me a judge or a divider over the Lord here shows us, that though a thing may be wrong, it may not be dispensationally eat mistakes are made. If Christ gave the world, so is the Church to give up the same. I am sure of this—that the path of the glory is just that of the Lord, except as it is not. We are not to expect everything set to for our passage to glory is accomplished; and, if you weigh things in the balances of human judgment you get them approved; but if according to the judgment of Christ, you get them condemned. Christ leads up to glory through the judgment of the world; He did He regulate the world. Now this generation is in order through benevolence—large benevolence. But the Lord Jesus is not acting as a guide for God—he is not regulating it, just as regulating it; but he is separating a people out who should be ready for every good work—ready to the last penny; it is impossible to measure the benevolence of the Church, but we are not to regulate the world.

5. "And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not; they spin not; yet I say unto you, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like these. If, then, God so clothe the grass, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith!" Beautiful reasonings, He contends with the covetousness, and then He comes into His Father's sphere, and addresses us on the principle that casts in our lot with Himself. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (ver. 32). It is not the persecution that the Lord has before Him, but the circumstances. You may be disinherited but you have a kingdom that none can take away from you; beloved, does your heart and mind prize this manner? If we do not, they will not be so to us; but the more I cleave to Christ, the more music to me; if I be lying on the heart then I can enjoy it. Amidst the changes and vicissitudes of human life, this word would be the ears. Ver. 33 "Sell that ye have, and give it; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, in the heavens that faileth not, where

no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth." Oh! if we have cast in our lot with Christ, this 33rd verse will be infinitely delightful; because we are to have a common kingdom, the same glorious inheritance. If we have cast in our lot with a rejected Lord, these demands will be acceptable. Why was not the feast acceptable? Nothing was wanting, but the heart was preoccupied. The farm had got the heart—the oxen—the wife; and they pre-indisposed the heart for the feast. Verse 35. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when He will return from the wedding; that, when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately." That is, men of one intent, waiting for Jesus. What is wanting is—to be men of one purpose—and waiting—and watching.

The Lord does not give us a minute account of these things; but He gives us a summary view of what He meant—being all day long in the attitude of "waiting" for one loved, not feared (verses 37-39).

There is no "blessedness" attached by the lips of Christ, to the man watching against the thief—to keep his own house is not keeping his master's house. There is safety attached to it; but he does not say "blessed".

Now, in what attitude are we? Are we like men that have something to guard, or like those who are waiting for their loved and coming Lord. The Lord grant it may be so!

NEARLY HOME.

I AM growing very weary,
As the years fly on apace,
And I'm longing, sorely longing,
For a sight of Jesus' face.

I have been a long, long journey,
Over mountain, plain, and moor,
And I think that very nearly
Now my travelling days are o'er.

Yet on tracing all the pathway
Over which my feet have trod,
I've a thousand, thousand reasons
To sing glory to my God.

When the road was steep and rugged,
And I dared not walk alone,
Then He whispered words of comfort,
Till the dreary way was done.

When I fell through careless walking,
Then He heard me when I cried,
And I now can see He drew me
All the closer to His side.

I have passed through many troubles,
And through worries great and small,
Aye! and often things I dreaded
Never came to pass at all.

Therefore though my feet are weary,
Yet my heart is full of rest,
For I know whatever happens
Will be ordered for the best.

X.

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SHADOWS OF CHRIST. PART XIV.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread. (Ex. xii. 8, &c.)
"Let us keep the feast." (1 Cor. v. 8.)

THE Passover having been killed and the blood sprinkled, a Feast is now spread for the sheltered ones.

This is according to the Grace of our God, which, whilst it provides Salvation for the sinner, does also much more than that. Such love as His could not be satisfied with merely delivering from wrath and leaving the saved one at a distance. The purpose of God's heart has been to bring the saved ones nigh into His own blessed presence; to bring them there not as servants but as sons; to seat them at His own table; to feast them on His own bread; to cause them to drink of the river of His own pleasures; to make them to know assuredly the welcome that His love has given them, and the joy it is to Him to have them at home in His presence as children in the Father's house.

Many foreshadowings of this there are in Scripture. Thus Abram was not only met and blessed by Melchisedek, but also entertained as a guest, and cheered and strengthened with bread and wine. Thus the Elders of Israel went up into the mount, "and they saw the God of Israel, and there was under His feet as it were paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness; and upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand; also they saw God and did eat and drink." (Ex. xxiv. 10, 11.)

Thus the priestly family fed on the Sacrifices and the Shewbread, and were partakers with the Altar, eaters of the portion of Jehovah.

Thus David shewed "the kindness of God" unto Mephibosheth, bringing him, "lame on both feet" though he was, to eat at his table continually as one of the king's sons. And so also in the New Testament there is the welcome of the long-lost son—the kiss, the robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, the feast, the music and the dancing; all to tell to the believing heart the love that has saved us and brought us nigh.

Nor can the twenty-third Psalm be forgotten—the table prepared in the presence of the enemy, the anointed head, the overflowing cup, the everlasting dwelling-place in the house of the Lord; all bearing witness to the exceeding riches of the Grace that loved us when we were dead in sins, and has made us even to be sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

And yet more closely is this loving-kindness pressed upon the hearts of the saints, when they contemplate the gracious manner of the Son of God Himself when upon earth. How constantly He ate and drank with His loved disciples—how at the last supper they talked together in blessed holy familiarity, one even leaning upon His breast. How in resurrection again His own pierced hands prepared the fire and laid the fish thereon, and when He called them to Himself it was to come and dine. Nor does it end here. "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching, verily I say unto you that He shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and will come forth and serve them." (Luke xii. 37.)

It will be the marriage supper of the Lamb. The feast that shall never end, the music and the mirth that are for evermore.

Thus from the hour of the sinner's first shelter from wrath behind the blood of sprinkling, till the hour of his entering into the heavenly glory, he is taught his place at the table of the Lord. Faith hears the voice of Love saying, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!" joyfully accepts love's gracious invitation, enters the banqueting-house with no suspicious tread, and is satisfied with the goodness of the Lord and the rich provision of His house.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread beginning on the night of the Passover, seems especially to foreshadow that feast of Communion with God to which the believer is called in this age of peculiar grace immediately following the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The most prominent characteristic of it is HOLINESS; the putting away of leaven out of their houses being the first and most urgently-repeated injunction. Thus it is that "the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present age". (Titus ii. 11, 12.)

Law and all its penalties could never plead for practical holiness like the Grace that bringeth Salvation. It begins by placing the condemned sinner under the shelter of the blood of Christ; it saves him and calls him with a HOLY calling; it creates him anew in righteousness and true HOLINESS; it brings him into the presence of a HOLY God; and imparts to him a MOST HOLY faith, seals him with the HOLY Spirit, and brings him into the discipline of the family of God, in order that he may be made partaker practically of His HOLINESS.

Sad it is, that such grace as this should be abused, that the liberty it confers should be used as an occasion to the flesh that those who ought to have adorned it by their lives and commended it to the world, have formed so low an estimate of its claims, and responded to them so feebly as to bring the very doctrine of the Grace of God into disrepute and reproach, and cast a stumbling-block before the unsaved.

There is no lack of Scripture testimony as to what is meant by the putting away of leaven. In 1 Cor. v. 8, it is spoken of as "malice and wickedness," in opposition to "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth". Again, in Gal. v. 9, it is used in reference to evil doctrine subversive of the truth of the Gospel. Christ also speaks of "the leaven of the Pharisees

which is hypocrisy", and also of "the leaven of the Sadducees," referring to their pernicious rationalist doctrines. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is that the enjoyment of which the children of God are called throughout the whole of this present age. They are in the world, as Israel were in Egypt, but not of it. Separated from it by the blood of sprinkling, it theirs to sit down in assured safety and peace at the table of Communion with God—to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lamb that was slain.

The materials of which the Feast consisted conveyed much instruction. First there was the lamb. Having been killed, it was "roasted with fire," not "sodden at all with water". Herein is shewn the unmitigated severity of the judgment of a Holy God against sin through which the Lamb of God deigned to pass for us.

None of the lamb was to be carried out of the house. If the household was too little to consume it all, the next neighbour was to be called in to partake. It was not to be a far-off neighbour, a favourite friend, but the neighbour nearest, be he rich or poor. All had been alike the slaves of Pharaoh, all had alike been exposed to the stroke of divine wrath, all were alike Elect of God and sheltered by the blood, therefore all alike were fitted to partake of the feast. One household was not to exclude another, or to say "we cannot receive you here"—the neighbour next was to be free called to share the abundant provision.

But no foreigner was to partake, no hired servant, no uncircumcised person. It was for the commonwealth of Israel, and for them alone. If the stranger or the slave desired to partake, they must first be received by the rite of circumcision into the sphere of the covenant made with Abraham and his seed according to the flesh.

So is it yet. Communion with God is not attainable except by those who are the Spiritual circumcision, the seed of Abraham through faith in Christ Jesus. Hence the feast of the Lord's Supper which is indeed, a most specially, a feast of Communion with God, is one for such. "What communion hath light with darkness? What part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever. Wherefore come out from among them and be yet separate saith the Lord." (2 Cor. vi. 14-16) "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of circumcision, for we are the circumcision who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have

no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 2, 3)* Moreover, even an Israelite might be unfitted through defilement to commemorate that Feast. (See Num. ix. 5-13.) And for such the gracious provision was made, that they should keep it undefiled on the fourteenth day of the second month.

But terrible was the judgment pronounced upon the man who was neither defiled nor on a journey, and yet neglected this ordinance. And though no judgment is formally pronounced against those who would now forsake the assembling of themselves together, yet what can there be but chastisement, or else leanness, for the soul that lightly esteems the weekly communion feast of the Church of God.

As the lamb, roast with fire shewed forth the Lord Jesus in connection with His atoning sacrificial work; so the unleavened bread being of the same material as the meal-offering, shewed forth the holy perfect character of Him who is the Gift of God.

Thus the passover became a kind of epitome of all the offerings. As the sin-offering sheltering from wrath, as the burnt-offering roast with fire, as the peace-offering eaten in communion with God, as the meal-offering accompanied with unleavened bread.

Another accompaniment of the feast was "bitter herbs". These, though bitter, were wholesome. As in 1 Cor., the absence of leaven is explained in chap. v. So in chap. xi. there is that which explains the "bitter herbs." "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat."

Bitter herbs without the Lamb and the bread would have been a poor and unsatisfying feast. But taken along with the lamb and the bread they would be wholesome, and hardly even disagreeable. Thus self-examination alone is poor fare for the soul to feed on. How many there are that hardly ever get beyond it. The unworthiness of self is their constant theme. They suffer from darkness, and doubt, and bondage, and bitterness of soul, and are almost driven to despair, because, together with the bitterness of self-examination, self-judgment, they do not feast themselves to satisfaction on the dying love of Jesus, on the holy, gracious character of the Son of God as God's gift to them.

That self-judgment, in connection with a deep appre-

* It has been taught that baptism came in the room of circumcision, but this verse, compared with Col. ii. 10-12, shews that the true circumcision of the New Covenant is identification with Christ in His death and resurrection through faith.

hension of the atoning work of Christ, will produce humiliation and sorrow on account of sin is certain, but it will not be the sorrow of the world that worketh death, but the "godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of". (See 2 Cor. vii. 10.)

Again the attitude of the partakers is important.

"And thus shall ye eat it with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover."

Thus as the blood sprinkled lintel and the closed door told of a people within who were separated to God and saved, so the manners of those who ate the feast all told of separation in heart from Egypt, of readiness to leave it all at the instant of the call of Jehavah, of a faith and a hope that drew their hearts to another and a better land, whither their steps were soon to be directed.

And such ought to be the daily declaration of both the speech and the ways of the Children of God in this present age. As strangers and pilgrims, with girded loins and burning lights, feasting through the world's dark night on the Lamb of God, and waiting for the shout that shall call the living and the dead in Christ to the inheritance reserved in heaven.

Compassion for the doom of Egypt they might have, but desire to linger in it they had none. Alas for the Christian who desires to return to the world from which grace has separated him! His eyes are blinded both to the character and doom of the world, and to the character and glory of God.

The night of Israel's deliverance was the night of Egypt's doom. "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the Prince of this world be cast out." Oh, the bitterness of the cry that rose from every home in Egypt! And such, but infinitely more appalling, will be the cry that yet shall rise from this guilty world as it awakes to the fearful reality that grace has been despised too long—that the wrath of the Lamb is their portion.

May the children of God have grace so to live now as not to deceive the souls of men, not to foster their mad indifference, but with the eagerness of those who would pull another out of the fire, so may they seek to snatch sinners even as brands from the burning.

J. R. C.

BAPTISMAL TRUTH,
OR, THE TESTIMONY OF ALL BAPTISMS.
By M. T. BOSWELL.

Continued from February Number.

CHAP. II.—THE BAPTISM OF THE CROSS.

NOW in the development of our subject, we approach that great event, the baptism of the cross of Calvary, of which all the other baptisms were but figures. We have seen the Son of God plunged by John in the river Jordan (judgment). Let us examine a little the history of that river. It separated the Land of Promise, type of the heavenly inheritance of the people of God of this present time, from the desert, type of the aspect that this present world bears for all who have been redeemed out of it by the blood of the Lamb of God. Israel had been brought out of Egypt after the death of the Paschal Lamb across the Red Sea at midnight. The morning of deliverance found them separated for ever from the Land of Egypt by the great waters of Judgment. That which happened in reality to the Egyptians, who sank as a stone to the bottom of the waters, happened in type to the Israelites. No deliverance from Egypt for the people without the previous death in reality of the Paschal Lamb, and the death in type of that same people. All the nation was baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. (1 Cor. x. 2.)

A beloved Swiss brother and servant of Christ,* who has himself written an excellent treatise on the subject of believer's baptism, and who has with various other disciples in Switzerland submitted to the ordinance, and whom with them I would earnestly recommend to the sympathy and prayers of the faithful, that God would enable them to walk in the power of the truth of baptism, newness of life, and preach the doctrine in power to all saints,—this brother, I say, suggested to me lately an idea respecting this baptism unto Moses, which I have considered and developed as follows:—

* This brother remarks in a letter just received, that the fact that we ought to declare by act the recognition on our part that we merit death, is so entirely in accordance with all the precepts of Scripture, that it is strange that anyone should have so long forgotten or trodden under foot so evident a truth. They have spoiled the truth by sprinkling which says the opposite, and brings no reproach, and opens wide a great gate for the world. It is the most subtle counterfeit of him who transforms himself into an angel of light the better to deceive his victims. The world has been able eagerly to adopt such a counterfeit because the reality is too separating for it.]

Moses the future deliverer of Israel is put into ark and exposed in the place of death, the river N. There he dies in type, where so many young child had already been put to death by the tyranny of Pharaoh the type of the Devil, the Prince of this world, whence he was drawn and afterwards received the name of Moses, which signifies—"Drawn out of the Water" (Ex. ii. 10; Ps. xviii. 16), and it is also said of another like unto Moses. We read twice that Moses was beautiful, once that he was divinely beautiful. (Ex. 2; Acts vii. 20; and see Greek of Heb. xi. 23.) He was thus a type of him who is said to be altogether lovely (Cor. v. 16), and, as a new-born child, type of the innocence of the Son of God. Thus Moses had already been saved across the water, and subsequently the nation of Israel was saved across the waters of the Red Sea, being baptized unto Moses, that is to say according to the example of Moses and to be his disciples. (John ix. 28.)

In passing, one may also remark that Noah and his household were also saved in the ark across the water of the flood that covered the world of the ungodly and destroyed them all. Noah and his household shut in the ark passed through the same overwhelming judgment that immersed, not sprinkled, the ungodly. This event, says Peter, is analogous to the baptism of the present day. (1 Peter iii. 21.) Thus we see that all these baptisms teach one and the same lesson—overwhelming judgment and death for the enemies of God, but of deliverance for his people across the same places of judgment and death.

I repeat that Israel passed through the baptism of the Red Sea at midnight, and found themselves in the morning on the shore of Salvation, beyond the tyranny of Pharaoh, singing in the joy of their heart, beautiful type of sinners, who by faith pass from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. (John v. 24; 1 Peter ii. 9.) But while Israel passed the Red Sea at midnight, they passed the Jordan in full light of day. It was at the time of harvest when the Jordan was overflowing all its banks, rushing with fury onward and into the Dead Sea; it was at this moment that its great waters being heaped up, Israel conducted Joshua (which is but the Hebrew form for Jesus) passed the Jordan, I repeat, in full light of day. (See Joshua chap. iii.)

Certainly it is when the full light of the True Light shines upon the work of Calvary and the judgment

the cross, and enlightens the souls of the redeemed that then they also pass by faith across the Jordan of Calvary by the way opened for them through its great waters of Judgment (Ps. xlii. 6-7) into the true land of Promise, those heavenly places, where our Joshua is gone before us. These waters of Jordan were held back by the power of God, or they had swept Israel into the Dead Sea ; so the judgment which has already fallen on the Innocent One is now by the power of God kept back from falling on his redeemed, and sweeping them into the lake of fire !

To resume my subject, we see the Son of God plunged by John Baptist in the river Jordan. As the Holy One of God He goes down into its waters without spot or blemish. Then He comes up immediately out of the waters and presents Himself again as the Holy One of God, accepted of His Father after this act as the same lamb without blemish and without spot, who takes away the sin of the world. Notice especially the word immediately—as if, so to speak, the Holy Spirit who relates this act is anxious to make us see that the Prince of Life neither was to remain, nor could remain in the place which represented death. Similarly, Peter, speaking of the Jordan of Calvary, says that it was impossible that he could be holden of it. (Acts ii. 24.)

But while the Son of God presents Himself thus before his Father in the beauty of holiness ; baptized Israel remains still in her sins. No voice from heaven pronounced them accepted of God. It is not even said of them that they came up out of the water, for the truth of resurrection, for God's people is not yet fully manifested, as Jesus, the resurrection is Himself not yet fully manifested, and thus the silence of Scripture is most significant, and the contrast is truly striking. I repeat that the Son of God stands after His baptism under the eye of his Father in the beauty of holiness, and presents Himself, a man, an abode meet for the Spirit of holiness. Ah, if I may seek to penetrate the invisible, it seems to me that the eyes of every created intelligent being, whether in heaven or earth or in hell, must have been fixed on a baptism, which God from the height of His throne approved, and which the Holy Spirit from the opened heavens hastened to ratify. (Mark i. 10, margin.)

Again behold and contemplate the Son of God and consider His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. But, except a corn

of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone. The wages of sin is Death. Death and the grave must hold for ever, even the children of God, unless a Being is found who can satisfy their just demands. It is the fixed decree of God that man must die. The axe is now being laid at the root of the trees. But, lo, at this critical moment, the Son of God, Son of man, the man Christ Jesus, the Lamb whom God in His love has provided, who has already submitted to the baptism of the Jordan, advances to the baptism of Calvary. More and more deeply, at each step Jesus sinks in sufferings and anguish, led always by the Holy Spirit according to the will of God toward the cross. Behold Him there nailed by the hands of wicked men, Him, the Son of God, despised, insulted, rejected, outraged, and crucified by His own creatures !! Sinners, behold the man ! Saints of God, redeemed by His blood, behold Him, hear Him as he sinks more and more deeply in the unutterable anguish of His baptism at Calvary, even till all the great waters of the Jordan of the wrath of God Almighty on account of sin break with all their fury on the Head of the Innocent One. As the feet of the priests who bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm in the bed of Jordan (Jos. iii. 17) so the great Captain and High Priest of His people, almighty even in His weakness and in His death, endured the cross triumphing therein. The wrath of God is appeased ; His justice and His character are sustained ; His love and His mercy flow out ; it is finished, atonement is made ; sins are made an end of, blotted out. The sinner who believes in Jesus dies not, but lives eternally justified and forgiven. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.)

As I have already remarked, the Lord Jesus, speaking of His sufferings, calls them in the 22nd verse of the 20th chapter of Matthew a cup and a baptism—saying—“Ye shall indeed drink my cup, and ye shall be baptized with the baptism with which I *am* baptized.” In the gospel of Mark the Lord puts to two of His disciples this question—“Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of ?” In that of Matthew, he says—“Can ye drink of the cup that I *shall* drink of ?” Again, in both these gospels, speaking of His baptism, he says—“The baptism wherewith I *am* baptized,” while in that of Luke, he says, at the 50th verse of the 12th chapter—“I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” Thus the Holy Spirit who has given us these details, presents to our notice at the same time in these expressions—the

cup and the baptism—the sufferings throughout the entire ministry of the Lord Jesus, the man of sorrows, even to the last moment of His life, when nailed to the cross He cries—“It is finished,” and commends His spirit into the hands of His Father. The Word of God, in both Old and New Testaments, shows us the Lord Jesus throughout His ministry as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross, and He Himself in one word calls these all—my cup, and the cup which my Father hath given me—a cup which became more and more bitter as he drank it even to the dregs. So that in view of this last anguish, He cries, oppressed with sorrow—“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”—entreating His Father that, if it were possible, this cup might pass from Him, while His sweat became as great drops of blood rolling down to the ground. Behold the cup which remained to Him at this moment to drink, and the baptism with which He was to be baptized. He approaches the dregs of this cup, He begins to enter into the deepest places of the Jordan of Calvary. Let the inspired language of the Psalms speak to our hearts of these sufferings of Christ. (Luke xxiv. 27, 32, 44.)

The 88th Psalm, at the 6th and 7th verses, describes the very act, on the part of God, of the immersion of His Son under the waters of wrath, where addressing his God, He says—“Thou hast laid me in the *lowest* pit, in darkness and in deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.” (See also Jonah ii. 3.) The 15th verse of the same Psalm shows us the experiences of the Son of God under His deepest baptism, where He cries—“While I suffer Thy terrors I am distracted, Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; Thy terrors have cut me off, they came round about me all the day (see margin) like water. Again, in the 42nd Psalm—“O, My God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan. . . . Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts, all Thy waves and billows are gone over me.” Again, in the 69th Psalm, we hear the precious supplications of the Son of God to His Father for deliverance—“Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul, I sink in deep mire where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me.” At the 16th verse we read—“Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink, let me be delivered from the deep waters;

let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, nor let the pit shut her mouth upon me. . . . Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it. In the 18th Psalm we have the deliverance of the Son of God, where at the 16th verse He says—“The Lord sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of great waters. (See margin.) . . . He brought me forth also into a large place. He delivered me because I delighted in me.” Again in the prophet Jonah, “Out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice. For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas. . . . The earth with her bars was about me for ever, yet hast Thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.” Compare Jonah ii. 3, and Mat. xii. 40.

Thus all the events which we have considered whether the flood which destroyed the world of the ungodly, or the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, or the passage through the Jordan, as well as the baptism by John and that by Jesus, while on earth bare one invariable testimony to the Son of God, and prefigure more and more distinctly the great baptism at the cross, baptism with which all the redeemed are baptized in and with Him, and from which the Son of God and Son of Man rises again and presents Himself before his Heavenly Father in the Free Land of Promise above, as the Great Captain and High Priest of His redeemed people. Behold Him ye ransomed of God not only presenting Himself after this baptism as the Son, holy and accepted of the Father, but also presenting with Himself all his church gathered out of all nations, as a pure offering without spot or blemish, unblameable before the face of His God, and our God and of His Father and our Father. (Eph. v. 27; 1 Thess. iii. 13.) Behold Him receiving from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts ii. 33), and pouring forth abundantly upon His assembled disciples, that Spirit which reveals to them in power His finished work filling the room where they were assembled and submerging them in Himself. Behold these disciples filled with the Holy Spirit, who rest on them in visible form of cloven tongues as of fire employs their hearts and tongues to preach in the name of the Lord Jesus the glad tidings of His resurrection to every creature, making them disciples, and baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus declared to be the Son of God with power

His resurrection from among the dead (Rom. i. 2), and having received all power in heaven and earth, being manifested as the One in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and through *whom* we all have access by one *Spirit* unto the *Father*, embraces in that name of Jesus, which is above every name, all the fulness of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus must be and is also baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Union with Him who died and rose again is union with all the Three Persons of the Godhead, as Himself prayed that we might all be one, as His Father in Him and He in His Father, that we also might be one in them. (John xvii. 21.)

(To be Continued if the Lord will.)

THE ALTAR WHEREOF WE EAT.

HEB. XIII. 10.

PART SECOND.

IN all the various phases of Romanism the whole truth of this instruction contained in the former part is lost. There is a fancied altar on the earth, and there is never a view of the final end of offerings for sin. And it is interesting, but most sad, to notice illustrations of this erroneous system in the Church of England. In their Cathedrals and most Churches, especially all of recent construction, there is the nave, which represents the outer court of the tabernacle—the chancel representing the holy places, and in many modern churches this is somewhat elevated by steps, and is guarded by rails and a gate—and finally, separated from the chancel, and raised above it, is the place where the Priest enters alone, and from which he “dispenses” the bread and wine. This represents the Holy of Holies. It either has this meaning, or it has none. It is by arrangements of this kind that the precious truths of the Epistle to the Hebrews are obscured, and the foundation is laid for all those priestly pretensions, and that semi-Popish doctrine, which are now so common. That Christ once entered in for us with His own blood, and that when He said “It is finished,” the veil was rent from the top to the bottom, in order to intimate the final end of all barriers to the access of the worshipper into the Holiest—are truths which are altogether lost to many, and which can never be clearly preached, without a practical denial of the system which

is symbolised in the whole surrounding scene. The rails keep the Priest and the people apart, and so, necessarily, the standing of the saints is ignored in the experience of multitudes, who, in God’s sight, are as near to Him as His own dear Son. Nor is there less obscurity in some of the services of this Church. Every day the ministration begins with exhortations to humiliation for sin, in language which indicates no sense of the spirit of adoption (as in Ez. xviii. 27; Joel ii. 12; and Dan. ix. 9-10), and then there is the general confession, followed by an absolution (which a Priest alone is permitted to read) before the people commence a single prayer! And it is quite in keeping with this form, that we should find constant cries of “Spare us, good Lord!” and the words “Remember not our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, neither take thou vengeance of our sins, spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever!” That there are individuals who, in spite of all this, do discern the full meaning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and do rejoice in conscious access to God in perfect security and peace, is quite true; but this does not alter the fact that the system itself is unscriptural.

But it is not only in the Church of England that this defective teaching is found. Wherever there is a class of men who are supposed, by reason of their office, to stand nearer to God than the family of His redeemed children, there is the same failure to recognise the common but unspeakably high and blessed position in which all believers stand. He was made sin for us (and that was when he suffered without the gate) that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We forsake our own mercies, and practically detract from the perfectness of His work, when we fail to enter into the precious privileges which He has purchased and eternally secured for us. One principal expression and exhibition of our full acceptance through and in Him, is our participation of that, as our appropriate food, whereof those who serve the tabernacle had no right to eat; and as we know our right to feed on that sacrifice, of which the blood is ever before God within the Holiest of all, we fitly honour Him, who was once our substitute, and bore our sins in His own body on the tree. It is through Him, and not ministerially, or otherwise, through any priest, or any teacher of any kind, that we have our free access to God. We may be instructed in the way of truth more perfectly, by

those who are gifted to teach ; we may be helped by counsel, exhortation, and example, but if man intervene between the worshipper and the Father, he obscures the light, like a cloud intercepting the rays of the mid-day sun.

There are two main considerations which should accompany our view of this subject. The first is the solemnity and grandeur of our high calling to such a place of blessing, and the other is our consequent obligation to thankfulness and holiness. Hannah, in her song of praise, spoke in the Spirit the language of exultation and triumph, when she said "He raiseth the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them to inherit the throne of glory" (1st Sam. ii. 8.) And the joy of the bride is uttered in the words, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me into the banqueting house and his banner over me was love." (Song ii. 3-4.) But when the soul of the worshipper now contemplates the wondrous work which has brought him inside the veil, and feeds on its appropriate altar in the cross where the great sacrifice for sin was offered under the scorn and hatred of men, and the hidings of the righteous God, its proper condition is fellowship with the sufferings, which wrung the cry of anguish from the stricken heart of Jesus. We see Him despised and rejected by men, hanging between two thieves, afflicted and brought into the dust of death by God Himself, spoiled by all the powers of the enemy, bearing human guilt, His countenance more marred than that of any man, His body bearing the marks of the Roman scourge, and his cheeks of the violence of those who plucked out the hair, crowned with thorns, his tongue dried up, and all his bones out of joint, his heart broken with sorrow and reproach, and then we trace the glorious issue, in the presentation of His own blood in the Holiest, and the immediate rending of the veil, and so we know assuredly that His work is perfect, and there remains no more sacrifice for sin. He has entered into the Holiest for us, and as He is, so are we. Conquerors through Him, and Priests in endless association with Him, He will Himself lead the chorus of our praise. And while we realise this blessedness, we learn the due consequence of it, in respect of our earthly portion, as the Apostle speaks, "Let us go forth to Him without the camp bearing His reproach". If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with

Him. The world has its allurements, and growin exhibits the skill of Satan to fascinate the poor v heart of man ; but the believer reckons himself crucified with Christ, and crucified therefore to world and the world to him. The only estimate can form of its true character, is based on its estim of the Lord of Glory ; and therefore his true place l on earth is the place of separation alike from pleasures, its ambition, and its religion. The end these things is death, "but the way of life is above the wise, to depart from hell beneath." (Prov. xv. 2) We go forth to Him who was hurried by the madde crowd outside the camp : to Him, and to Him al There He meets the wants of the soul and the des of the heart, with a satisfying fulness which fills hungry souls, and cheers the longing soul with his gness. And this is not an occasional effort, not the perience of a weekly service, but a life. The service the earthly tabernacle, and the service of the w equally fail to supply the needs which have b created in the renewed heart of man, for they are limited, because spiritual and eternal. But the deep need of the convinced sinner, even the chief, and highest longings of the most heavenly-minded sa are met to the uttermost, when they feed by faith the altar of which the Apostle speaks. The blood o is the everlasting memorial of justice appeased ; grace set free, and the Lamb Himself in the mid the throne is the faithful witness in heaven righteousness, mercy, and truth.

Oh love that met my need,
When Jesus bled and died,
How vast the price of all the food,
With which I'm satisfied !

M. W.

ON SANCTIFICATION.—I.

THERE is in the minds of many believers m obscurity and uncertainty respecting the doctr of sanctification. This may arise from three causes. First, from the habit of considering sanctification exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit, and disc necting it from the work of Christ. Secondly, from c founding the holiness to which a believer may prac ally attain, with that in which he stands accepted bef God, through the death and resurrection of the L Jesus—in other words, by viewing sanctification sol as *progressive* instead of completed. Thirdly, from

mis-conception as to the nature of the flesh, and the supposition that the Holy Spirit by an inward process gradually purges out the evil, thus by slow degrees making the believer fit for heaven. Before investigating the scriptures of the New Testament with reference to the three points of this subject specified above, it may be well to turn to some parts of the Old Testament where the typical sanctification of Israel and its priesthood is especially brought before us.

Sanctification under the law involved three great principles: first, judgment executed on account of evil; secondly, cleansing from defilement; thirdly, separation to God.

Israel was a nation holy unto the Lord upon all these grounds. God severed them from the nations to Himself; "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine" (Lev. xx. 26). In effecting this, He passed them unscathed through (as it were) baptisms of blood and judgment; typically cleansed them, and provided for the restoration of such cleanness by various sacrifices and washings.

God hallowed the first-born of Israel unto himself, by judging the first-born of Egypt, and by the blood of the paschal lamb; they became separated to God because his wrath had fallen on the lamb in their stead; He passed over them when he saw the blood which spoke of judgment; whilst on the first-born of Egypt it fell with unmitigated severity. In a certain sense, that which is given up to destruction under the holy justice of God becomes consecrated;* hence the same Hebrew word is used for *devoted* and *accursed*, and the Latin word *sacer* has the same double signification, as *auri sacra fumes*, the accursed thirst for gold. The saved sinner is holy in the primary sense, upon the ground of the solemn judgment which has passed upon him, in his substitute, the Lord Jesus.

Aaron and his sons were "anointed," "consecrated," and "sanctified," as priests to God. (Ex. xxviii. 41.) They were washed; blood was put upon their ears, hands, and feet; and they were sprinkled with oil upon their persons, and garments, in order to separate them as a priestly family from a nation already sanctified to Jehovah. In the case of the cleansed leper, also, some-

* May not the meaning of the passage in John x. 36, "Say ye of Him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world," be, that God had set apart his beloved Son especially to be the victim and to bear the curse, and had sent him into the world for that end?

what similar typical ceremonies restored him to his place in that holy nation from which his uncleanness had shut him out. It is to be observed that the ear, hand, and foot, are touched with the blood before the oil is placed upon them: the cleansing virtue of the sacrifice made way for the holy unction.

Water mingled with the ashes of the red heifer (Num. xix.), is peculiarly denominated "the water of separation"; like the blood of bulls and goats, it sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Heb. ix. 13), and has its antitype in the precious blood of Christ.

The tabernacle and its vessels, when first fashioned were all sanctified by the anointing oil. (Ex. xxx. 26, 27). No original uncleanness defiled them—but subsequently the sin of Israel penetrated into the holiest, and on the great day of atonement, blood had to be sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, and also on the golden altar of incense. Thus were the holy places reconciled and hallowed from the uncleanness of the children of Israel: and to this, probably, St. Paul alludes in Heb. ix. 21: "Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood." We do not read of any sprinkling of the tabernacle and vessels with blood in the Old Testament, except on the occasion above alluded to.

From these instances we may gather the truth, that where sin or uncleanness had in any wise defiled either vessels or persons, they could be restored to holiness only by means of blood.

The presence of God necessarily sanctified every place in which He manifested Himself; whether the camp of Israel, the tabernacle, or the temple; and the very ground became holy in the region where He appeared. But Israel was a separated people, redeemed by blood before He dwelt among them; and the way for his presence had to be prepared, as regards the tabernacle and the temple, by many sacrifices.

Holiness implies the knowledge of what is unclean and evil, an estimation of sin according to the perfect standard of truth, and a consequent abhorrence of and separation from all that is corrupt. Where this really exists, no error however small, no taint however slight will be excused or palliated. Adani, before his fall, was *innocent*, but could not be called *holy*. He had no power to appreciate what was sinful, although he was himself sinless. The elect angels, on the other hand, are holy; they have witnessed the fall of their

fellows and of man, have been upheld by God, and are able to estimate the fearful ruin which sin has caused, and the estrangement and separation from God which have resulted. "A just weight and balance are the Lord's." (Prov. xvi. 2.) He alone has the power to weigh, and He has provided the perfect standard of holiness, truth, and righteousness; and has also manifested to the full His judgment of evil. Nothing less than the fearful outpouring of His wrath on the Holy One, under the curse on the tree, could suffice either as a manifestation of His holiness, or as the measure of his estimate of sin. Any imperfection or falling short of the full measure of Christ in man, is unholiness; the blood of Christ to hallow from such imperfections, and acceptance in Him, will alone suffice for our sanctification.

Let us now turn to the subject of sanctification as treated of in the New Testament. It will be found that there are texts which speak of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus, besides the Holy Spirit, as engaged in the work of sanctification.

Jude begins his Epistle by addressing "them that are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ, called". Here believers are regarded as made holy by and in the Father; the Spirit of God manifestly directing our thoughts to the blessed truth, that we have been set apart in His eternal counsels and are begotten by Him, and thus having Him as our Father are necessarily holy. In Heb. x. 10, sanctification is traced up to the will of God, "by the which will we are sanctified". He having foreknown his own, chosen them in Christ, and predestinated them to be conformed to the image of his Son, in due time provided the way by which they should be set apart and sanctified to His own glory. In order to accomplish this wondrous work of grace, it was needful that the sinner should be cleansed, and made a new and holy being. By the one offering of Jesus, God has according to his own will sanctified and perfected for ever believers in Him. In the death of his Son they have been for ever buried as sinners out of the sight and remembrance of God; the body of sin has been destroyed; sin in the flesh has been utterly condemned, God's solemn judgment has been passed and executed, not only in their iniquities and transgressions, but in the very spring and source of evil—the flesh; and Christ, being raised from the dead, they have been quickened together with Him, have become new creatures, are "called saints".

God the Father calls as well as justifies, and His a holy calling, so that, as it is expressed in Rom. i. and 1 Cor. i. 2, believers are "called saints". The insertion in these passages of the words *to be*, great impairs the force of the original: the authoritative calling actually constitutes believers holy: "Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began". (2 Tim. i. 9.) "The called according to purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.) "Holy brethren, partake of the heavenly (or rather super-heavenly) calling (Heb. iii. 1.) Hence it appears that God the Father is the Sanctifier, because He has chosen, called, hol provided the means of cleansing, and begotten his own

In Heb. ii. 11, and xiii. 12, the Lord Jesus is the Sanctifier. The former passage runs thus:—"Both I that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call the brethren". The church is here regarded as of one Father, one life, one family, one-wise with Christ, that He is not ashamed to call them brethren, and they are holy brethren, for He has sanctified them with his own blood, as in chap. xiii. 12. The whole epistle presents to us the Sacrifice and the great High Priest accomplishing a perfect and eternal redemption, in contrast with the mere fleshly sanctification under the law. Eph. v. 25-27, also presents Christ as the Sanctifier of the church. "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." A very blessed passage, letting us into the heart of Christ—his love prompting Him to give up his life in order that He might so cleanse and hallow the church as to make it meet for His own glory, and rest contented in contemplating its perfection—what a sanctification is this!

One text speaks of the saints as sanctified *in* Christ Jesus: "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called saints". (1 Cor. i. 2.) It may be questioned whether the Greek preposition here translated *in* might not be equally rendered *by*, as is the case in several other passages; indeed, by the use of this preposition the Spirit of God seems to convey the double truth of sanctification *by* and *in* Christ. The Lord Jesus has by his blessed work on the cross effected the holiness of

the church—but that holiness is held in union with Him.

Redemption, in its widest sense, includes righteousness and sanctification; for the sinner is not only ransomed from all the penalties which by nature and practice he has incurred, but is redeemed *to God*, “who hath redeemed us to God by blood”. (Rev. v. 9.) Moreover, redemption is not only by, but in Christ—believers are chosen in Christ—predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto God—accepted in the Beloved, and redeemed in Him. (Eph. i. 4-7.) In this great salvation God has made Christ to be everything to the believer; “Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom (that is to say) righteousness, sanctification, and redemption”. (1 Cor. i. 30.)

To attempt, therefore, to separate the work of the Holy Ghost from that of Christ in the salvation of a sinner, confining redemption to the one, and sanctification to the other, cannot but be productive of error.

H. W. S.

THE POSSESSION OF THE SPIRIT.

NOTE No. II.

WE have seen some parts of what the Lord Jesus Himself said on this interesting and momentous subject. In natural order, the day of Pentecost now suggests itself. He had given the disciples the command that they should not leave Jerusalem, “but (Acts i. 4) wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of me, for”—he added, by way of promise, “John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence”. So they waited. On the appointed day they assembled of one accord; and there they received the fulfilment of the promise, a most signal blessing. “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and they began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts ii. 4.) The passage is so familiar that we need not go over it in detail, but Peter clearly expounded the occurrence to the Jewish people of every language, who were in Jerusalem at the time, as the fulfilment of that which had been foretold eight hundred years before through the prophet Joel, and justified God’s ways to men, shewing forth that this Jesus was indeed the Messiah whom they had crucified and slain—and that God had made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ. “Repent,” said he, “and be baptized

every one of you for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts ii. 36, 38.)

A doubt may sometimes cross the mind of some, with reference to these and such-like precious promises and privileges. Happy were those disciples of the Lord’s own time, and to whom these were personally and expressly addressed! But are such things indeed for me, unworthy as I am? Can it be that these scriptures apply to me, a weak and wayward and foolish one, who can do nothing but look up and even fear and hesitate in my upward look? Ah! yes, they are indeed. For, you see so plainly, Peter extends the promise of the Spirit to his own hearers who should believe, and still farther onward and forward to “as many as the Lord our God shall call.” So that there is really no limit, in any way, to time, place, or person. There are also other portions of the Word of God which make the truth broader and plainer, and applicable equally without any possible reservation to all Christians of all time and of every degree. In the Epistle “to the Saints who are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ Jesus”—just the same class of persons as those who in our day believe and are sanctified by the blood of Christ—the Apostle says to all such (Eph. i. 13) that “after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory”; and again, in another place (Eph. iv. 30), he says, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye were sealed unto the day of redemption”; and yet again (Eph. v. 18), he exhorts these Christians to be “filled with the spirit”. In writing to the Corinthians (2 Cor. i. 22) the same truth is brought out in the same way, “God hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”

Now, what is the import of these passages? We all know what a seal is, and we all know what the operation of applying a seal to any deed or document implies. Clearly this. It is stamping or confirming the writing as our act and deed—adopting it in all its parts as, and making it our own, beyond challenge, exception, or repudiation. In another kind of usage, the impressing of the seal is the authentication of fact, or a safeguard applied to preserve the evidence of fact; as for instance, on the repositories of the dead, or more

signally on that stone which was rolled into the doorway of His tomb. The Holy Spirit thus is presented to us as an abiding gift bestowed on us after we have believed; although, at the same time, we must not lose sight of the truth that He has been in operation with His own infinite grace and power in producing within our souls that very belief itself. Thus, and through such a dear divine and blessed gift, the crowning one of other unspeakable gifts, our God indelibly stamps us as His own—His blood-bought, redeemed, and precious purchase, to be for ever His—saved, and to be with Him through the endless ages. In the meantime, just as the seal is seen and recognised as that of the owner, proving the genuineness of his deed, or the authenticity of his property, so they who have received the impress of the Seal of the Holy Spirit are seen and recognised as God's. The presence of Divine grace is felt by others. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 14.) We see illustrations of this in servants of God who are known and received as spiritual men in truth. It ought to be so with all of us. Can (1 John. ii, 20) "the anointing from the Holy One" be hidden? The grace in the heart will manifest itself in grace in the life. "Holiness unto the Lord" will season speech and conduct. "Having (Rev. xiv. 1) His name and His Father's name written upon their foreheads," it is seen whose they are and whom they serve.

Thus on each He setteth His own secret sign,
 "They that have My Spirit, These," saith He, "are Mine."

But still more than this, for the other figure comes in—that of the earnest or foretaste of eternal joy. The Holy Spirit is bestowed on us by way of anticipation of the illimitable glory which is to be ours through Christ and throughout eternity. His presence within us is the shadow of the joy to come when we shall be gathered home. How precious when this is felt and realised! The soul seems as if it would go forth to meet its Lord, and death would cease to be dying. The very breath of heaven comes down and sweetness fills the heart. The "inheritance" is near. The "purchased possession" is in our hand. The day of our redemption is nearer than drawing nigh. The precincts of our heavenly home are within a step of the feet. The radiancy of glory—the glory of His felt presence shines with a flood upon the soul. Faith is certainty. Hope is assurance. Love is perfected. "Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He gave us." (1 John iii. 24.) The insatiable longing of the soul is—

Oh!—Shew Thyself to me,
 Or—Take me up to Thee.

R. S.

THE SHADOWS AND THE TRUE.

IN Hebrews x. 1. we read, that the law had a shadow of good things to come, and in chapter v. 19. "the law made nothing *perfect*".

Whatever God does is perfect, nothing can come from Him that is not so.

It seems therefore, that in these scriptures the Holy Spirit has in view, the full blessing which is in God's heart from all eternity, to give to redeemed dust, that He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. (Ephes. ii.) Until this design of God's heart of love was capable of being fully carried out, the *perfect* thing had not been reached.

The law failed, because it had a failing mediator and high priest, and its sacrifices could never righteously enable God, to give that *perfect* blessing He had designed to bestow, because *they never could set aside the barrier sin*.

Only when the *true* High Priest, had entered into the *true* tabernacle, with the tokens of His perfect work, as His title to the presence of God, could God give, as He designed from all eternity, perfect or as it is expressed in Hebrews ix. *eternal* redemption, *eternal* blessing.

Perfect blessing, that is, all that the Creator can ever bestow on the creature, could only rest on a *perfect* sacrifice, and a *perfect* Priest, hence it *became* God, it was due to Him as the Holy One, in bringing the many Sons, into the glory of *the Son*, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.

So we read in Hebrews vii. 19, that while the law could make nothing *perfect*, the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh to God.

That is, as the blessing of Israel on the day of atonement, rested on the bringing in of Aaron into the holiest,—thus enabling that nation to occupy still the place of nearness to God, which a year's sins had forfeited,—even so the *full* blessing, wondrous nearness, and the eternal redemption of the church, rests on the bringing in of the Lord Jesus Christ our hope, (compare Heb. ix. 12 and 2 Tim. i. 2) into the presence of God, and through Him, we have had our access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of *the glory of God*. All dovetailing into what is said in 1 Peter i. 21 "He raised Jesus from the dead, and gave *Him* glory, that *our* faith, and *our* hope might be in God".

Seeing then that God is *light* and that the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, is the substance, or perfect thing—or, God is light, and Christ was ever before Him; need we wonder, that when the light reached Israel, Christ should be the substance of all its ordinances.

Thus in Hebrews viii. we read of the *true* tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man. Here we have in figure the Lord Jesus Christ, and His mystical body the church, which is being builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

This was the substance (the *true*) of which the Jewish tabernacle was the shadow.

In the past eternity, in the heart of God, was this *true* tabernacle planned, its members all written in His book, with the day and year of their fashioning, (Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16) and this in *all* its glory shall be seen, when it shall be said "the tabernacle of God is with men" (Rev. xxi.)

Then in Heb. ix. 24 we read—"Christ entered not into the holiest made with hands, which are the figures of the *true*, but into Heaven itself."

True is used in all these verses, not as the opposite of *false* but the *true thing* of which the law could only give a shadow.

Thus the *true* dwelling place of God is Heaven, the Holy place in the tabernacle a figure.

It was truly a wondrous thing, for redeemed dust to enter once every year into the holiest, but oh! what a wonder to angels and archangels, a worm of the dust entering the *true* tabernacle, and with what holy wonder and joy, shall they witness redeemed dust shining in the likeness, and sitting in the presence of the Holy, Holy, Holy One!

The exceeding riches of His grace, shall then shine fully out, and to all eternity shall His wisdom be learned, who brought the worm Jacob, to walk among the stones of fire, in the full blaze of that light, which no man hath seen nor can see.

One object shall then fill every eye, one song come forth from every lip, "Worthy is the Lamb". His wounded hands and side forever telling, how, in the *worm's place* he said, "I am a worm, and no man," that so for ever he might say, "Fear not thou worm, for I have redeemed thee, *thou art mine*".

Again, in John vi. we read "My flesh is *true* meat and my blood is *true* drink," and in verses 32 and 33 the manna which Moses gave is contrasted with Christ

the *true* bread, and this bread is called the *bread of God*.

Oh! what grace, the very one on whom God fed, and found His delight, is the true bread He has given to us, so that our fellowship is with the Father through the Son.

With a fornicator of this world, we are commanded not to eat, (1 Cor. v.) and yet, the Holy One stoops down, and calls us to feast with Him.

In John iv. we read also of *true* worshippers, and in Hebrews ii. "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee".

Thus while Aaron and his sons are seen worshipping on the ground of the same blood, and the same sacrifices, (for in Lev. xxi. it is atonement for *Aaron and His house*, as well as for Israel) the *true* thing of which Aaron and his sons are the shadow, was Christ and His Church,

So nigh, so very nigh to God,
They cannot nearer be.

Oh! may we occupy by faith this near place, giving Jesus His place in our midst, when gathered to remember His death till He come, looking at Him by faith, as we shall do in the glory, then shall our heart be filled with *His* praise and with *His* honour all the day.

And finally, as the true worshippers, may we not only worship *in Spirit* but *in truth*; that is according to *His word*—thus shall we be saved from *will* worship, when our wills are subject to His. T. C.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

Rom. xiv., 10-12; 1 Cor. 4, 5; 2 Cor. 5-10; 1 Cor. iii., 13-16.

THE gain and loss of the judgment seat is a question concerning which our hearts may well be for ever at rest. We only need a right understanding of our place before God as children to see that the thought of condemnation never can enter there. We shall appear in our glorified bodies, grace having had its way to the full in resurrection; and then, but not till then, will come in the question of the righteous reward of service. We shall be "raised incorruptible" in virtue of our oneness with Christ, satisfied in His likeness for ever on the ground of His own perfect work: but every child is also a servant; and having taken his place as the one, must also receive his measure of reward as the other. In the joy of our apprehension of sonship, we

may forget our responsibility, but God never forgets. His grace can never be exercised at the expense of His righteousness. He has indeed brought us into depths and heights of blessing beyond our utmost thought. He has called us to His eternal glory: yea, to joint heirship with the Son of His love in free, rich grace. But it is grace on the ground of righteousness: a righteousness that claimed in our Substitute obedience unto death: that brought Him beneath every wave and billow of the judgment due to us, that we might share His place of sonship and blessing for ever. As to the hope of resurrection-glory then, we stand in His right as sons. As to the judgment of reward, we stand alone before God in responsibility as servants. Day by day and hour by hour we sow that we shall reap: we write, unconsciously it may be, the judgment we must righteously receive: we give its irrevocable colouring to the life we shall live in the ages to come. But let us look at the Word He has given us, "We must all appear—be manifested—before the judgment seat of Christ". Not our actions only—thoughts and motives shall be transparent in the light, and shall be tested by the searching of God's holy eye, for "Our God is a consuming fire". The quality of every service, the purposes of every heart, shall be laid bare, and weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and yet the very fire that tries, shall consume all the dross, and leave nothing to be gazed upon but that which bears the divine impress. Thus we see grace following after judgment. *But what shall we have left?* We have seen that it is not a question of condemnation, but it is a question of loss—not for the passing moment of our little life here, but loss for eternity. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss." (See also 2 Cor. v. 10.) It will be loss in the presence of Jesus—loss because we have loved Him so little, who loved us unto death, so little prized the brief opportunity for earthly service, never again to be recalled.

But as we look at judgment, we must not lose sight of grace; for it is grace alone that brings us to the judgment seat. The grace that called us as sons and servants; that worked in us to will and to do aught that could please Him, that gave opportunity, time, and strength; the same grace shall be our warrant to stand there, that every one may receive for the things done in the body. Every little service that the eye of love can discern shall be dwelt upon in loving approval. Thoughts of worship, and words of love—purposes

unknown to any heart but His (1 Cor. iv. 5) forgotten, it may be, by our own, shall be remembered no love but His could remember, because He seeks opportunity to bless. Shall there be any of all that gathered company so glad in that rejoicing day? The glories and the crowns that His own travail has purchased, His own hand shall lavish on His beloved and longed-for saints—brought home at last, and for ever to the joys of unveiled fellowship with Himself.

But there will be one joy beyond all the rest for—one in which all else shall in a sense be lost or forgotten—the approval of Christ. The look of a word of appreciation that shall fill our souls and brighten all our eternity, because it shall be His. We will cast our crowns before the throne, because our hearts shall need no more for ever.

Fellow saints, this is the time to win. This is the hour of opportunity. Short and swiftly pass our little day here, but it is ours ere it go by. Shall we use it for Jesus? Shall we have crowns to cast His feet in the deep consciousness of the alone worthiness of His grace, or shall we be saved as by fire? Our lips be silent, our lives must answer. There is a word in the Proverbs of deeply solemn import—"Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?" Has it no voice for us? Our life indeed is safe, because it is hid in Christ, but shall we be satisfied with life while "spiritual blessings" are our inheritance; or, shall we rather "ambitiously labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him".*

A. E. W.

II. CORINTHIANS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. J. G. BELLET,
19TH SEPTEMBER, 1851.

AS Moses reflected the characteristic glory of the Old Covenant, so Paul, in the Holy Ghost, presents a blessed reflection of the New Covenant. In this chapter we find this thought introduced. Moses' face shone—not that the law took its authority from him but he was the reflection of the righteousness in the law, as Paul was of righteousness in the Gospel. Moses did not bring the end of the law for righteousness, but he demanded righteousness from the sinner. Paul contrasts his own ministry with that of Moses (verses 2-16). Here it is the glory of the Lord, not

* Greek reading, Newberry's translation.

the law ; and his business is to reflect the moral power of that which he looked at.

In the first chapter there is one distinct ray of the glory of the Lord, and he caught it so distinctly that he reflected it in his ways amongst the churches, I mean the eternal stability of our interest in Christ. (Verses, 17-20.) Now when he insisted that he was not a man of a vacillating purpose, where did he get this? Does he say that he was an unbending man? No, he does not go to shew that his ministry was formed by nature. My purpose was not "yea and nay". No! I gaze at the glory of the Gospel too intently. And then he goes on expanding—he reflected the virtues that he had gazed at in Christ.

Again (ii. 10) "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven (if I have forgiven anything), for your sakes I forgive it in the person of Christ," was he a man of an easy temper? Was his pity and his suffering from nature? Not at all. "I forgive it in the person of Christ." Beautiful! Paul outdid Moses—he was not a man of stammering tongue—not a ray that was not moral and spiritual—there was no shining in his face, but in his ways. Again (iv. 1), "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, even as we received mercy we are not faint-hearted". Look at the Apostle toiling, but never fainting under the burden. Was it that he was a man of a strong natural temperament? No, but he was drinking in the gospel. He had proved that "the joy of the Lord is his strength". He had known mercy, and he turned round and reflected the power of it by serving them day after day, and never fainted. Look again at the second verse, "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God". Was it that he had it from nature? No, it was the manifestation of the truth. The truth linked him with all that. "That the life which I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Oh, beloved, there is a picture of Christian ministry! of a man that could not be anything in the world! a disciple of the despised Galilean; but despised as He was there was one thing which tracked His way, and to him He was always a sweet savour. O beloved! are you and I ready to go down in the world, that we may be lifted up after the pattern of Jesus?

The Lord teach us this lesson! This is the glory of this dispensation. You must teach the faculties of the new nature to discover it. The God of this world is hiding it every day more and more. The more we live in it, the more shall we be able to leave on each other's spirit a beautiful reflection; and by-and-bye we shall be addressed with the language—"Ye are they that have continued with me in my trials; come ye blessed of my Father". Oh! the Lord enable us to cling to a Christ rejected of the world, but now glorified in the heavens!

"YE DO SHEW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE COME."

1 Cor. xi. 26 AND x. 17.

AS we gather round the table of the Lord to remember Him, one thought is linked by the Holy Ghost with His death as our substitute, and that one thought is His coming again. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death—till He come." It seems as if the Holy Ghost had shut us up to one past and one future, His death, and His coming: filling our present with the remembrance of ONE passed into the heavens, now to appear in the presence of God for us. We sit at the table as guests, bringing nothing there, everything provided by free, rich grace, at His own unmeasured cost, and yet our beloved Lord brings us into fellowship so close even in this testimony to our purchased place of blessing, that not the bread and the wine alone as symbols, but our partaking of them, shews forth His death till He come. Thus too, we testify to our union with each other in feeding on the one bread; but no thought of this finds place on the table, where the one paramount truth shines out to fill and absorb our souls—the precious broken body and shed blood of our slain but returning Lord Jesus, for "even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us". As we eat of the one bread, and drink of the one cup, we symbolise our consequent oneness: "We, being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread". We feed by faith on the one Christ, and thus being partakers of Him, have fellowship also one with the other—the fellowship of one life: but all this follows in its own place.

Our unity is not shewn forth on the table, but in the common partaking of the feast. The more entire and undivided our apprehension of "Jesus only" in our midst, as the one object of remembrance as of worship, the more full shall be, as a consequence, our acknowledgment of union one with the other in Him.

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THE LIFE-GIVER AND JUDGE.

John v. 19-29.

THE way of life is set forth in this chapter very simply. The Lord says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (judgment), but is passed from death unto life". Hearing, believing, and having are bound together. If we have heard and believed, we know on the authority of the Son of God that we have everlasting life.

Nor is this a new gospel. Of old, the prophet Isaiah said, "*Hear* and your soul shall *live*". Men are saved by faith; and faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Farther, the Lord says of those who have heard and believed, that they shall not come into judgment (for so the word is in the Greek), but are passed from death unto life. They have crossed the boundary line of the region of death, having become possessors of a new life over which death has no power, and to which judgment does not attach. The sins which would have brought judgment upon them are gone, covered by the blood of Jesus as truly as the Egyptian host was covered by the returning waters of the Red Sea, and they stand like Israel on the further side and sing, "The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my Salvation".

Some who read this may know what it is to ascend a mountain, to pass through the grey and chill mist and to stand in the sunlight at the summit, above the clouds. So it is with the Christian. He is risen with Christ. Judgment, for him, is overpast. Eighteen

hundred years ago, Christ bowed His head in death on the Cross under the load of his sins, and being now found in Christ alive from the dead there is for him no condemnation.

To have life is to be exempt from judgment. Like Israel in Egypt, those who believe are safe under the blood of the Lamb, and feed in peace on Christ "our passover sacrificed for us". Darkness is all around and without, judgment is near, but for them, the night is far spent, the day is at hand, and our salvation (in the sense of final deliverance) is nearer than when we believed. The guilty world outside rejects God's offered mercy, and remains under the sword of judgment which His long-suffering does not as yet suffer to descend. Reader, pause and consider—are you beneath the sword of God or the blood of Jesus? Have you life, or are you exposed to judgment.

The Lord Jesus is presented to us in these scriptures as Son of God and Son of Man. As Son of God He is the Life-giver. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (Ver. 21.) "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (Ver. 25.) As Son of Man, He is the Judge. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." (Ver. 22.) And He "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man". (Ver. 27.)

In one or other of these characters every man must have to do with Him. Life or judgment is the portion of each. Hereafter, there will be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. "All that are in the

grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth : they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." (Ver. 28-29.) Those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and have received eternal life will be found in the place of life, those who have not, in the place of judgment.

Life is communicated by the Son of God. To the power of the Godhead it belongs to quicken the dead. "Am I God," said the King of Israel, "to kill and to make alive"? (2 Kings v.) The same Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead speaks in the gospel now. It is preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; and the way of life, as we have seen, is to hear and believe. We are born again not of corruptible seed (from Adam), but of incorruptible (from Christ) by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Pet. i.)

This new life is a life of Sonship. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." "Now are we the sons of God." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying Abba Father." The possessor of it enters on a new relationship to God. He passes from the state and condition of a criminal who must one day stand at the bar of a Righteous Judge, to that of a son amenable to the present discipline of a Heavenly Father. This discipline is lifelong, and it is undergone by every child of God. It is inseparable from the relation of sonship. It extends over the whole period of the believer's regenerate life on earth, and the chastisement which is needful in the exercise of it is the only judgment for sin which he ever knows. Fatherly chastisement is the judgment of a Christian. "When we are judged, we are *chastened* of the Lord that we should not be *condemned* with the world." The lot of the world is to be judged by God at a time still future, the lot of the Christian is to be chastened *now*, to this very end that he should not be condemned with the world.

Judgment on the wicked is executed by the Son of Man. "God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained." (Acts xvii. 31.) This judgment by the Son of Man is of unbelievers, and it is for sins. Into it the believer does not enter. But there is another judgment in which he must appear :—"we (Christians, saved persons) must all appear before the

judgment seat of Christ" (as distinguished from that of the Son of Man) to be judged, not for our sins as criminals, but for our service to God as Christians.

It is important that the believer should see this distinction, that he may, on the one hand, be delivered from bondage fear ; and on the other, have an incentive to holy activity knowing that though he himself is accepted in Christ, much of his work may be disapproved. Being made free from sin, he has become a servant to God ; and the service he renders must pass in review at the judgment seat of Christ.

Suppose a prisoner sentenced to death, not only pardoned by the Queen, but taken into her service. His occupation is that of a gardener, and he is employed in Her Majesty's gardens. A day is fixed for a flower show, and he makes every exertion to produce such flowers as may take a prize. He looks forward to the day of exhibition, not with fear—for there is now no question of his personal safety—but with hope that he may receive a reward, and the intervening time is marked by carefulness and diligence, lest what he produces should be disapproved. This illustration may be helpful in explaining the position of the servant of God, in relation to the judgment-seat of Christ.

In 1 Cor. iii., we read concerning Paul's labour :—"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation and another man buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble ; every man's *work* shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's *work* of what sort it is. If any man's *work* abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's *work* shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved yet so as by fire."

From this we learn that the fire shall try every man's *work* (not his person) ; and that the trial will be of the sort of work done—of the quality, not the quantity. If a man's work shall be burned, he himself shall be saved (which conclusively shows that the teaching here is for Christians), yet so as by fire—like Lot, who escaped alive from Sodom, but had to leave to the flames the money and goods which he might have accumulated during his sojourn there — losing his

labour, though his life was saved. On the other hand, if a man's work abide, he shall receive a reward.

It is for every Christian seriously to consider what he is building, for he may be occupied with things highly useful from a worldly point of view, which yet will not stand the test at the judgment-seat of Christ. Wood and hay are both useful, but they can no more stand the fire than stubble. Many things beautiful in the eyes of men, and for doing which we may get the praise of men, will not survive that day. God's work must be done in God's way, according to His word and in the power of His Spirit. Such work alone will stand the searching light of the judgment-seat of Christ.

It has thus been shown that on believing the gospel we receive eternal life, and pass out of the region over which the judgment of God impends. Becoming sons of God we are subjected to His Fatherly discipline, and are chastened by Him that we may be made partakers of His holiness, and that we should not be condemned with the world. We are also servants of Christ and must appear before His judgment-seat. When the Lord comes our work will be tried, and we shall either suffer loss or receive a reward.

Delivered from judgment for sin, possessing eternal life, made sons of God, and become servants of Christ, we wait for the appearing of our Lord. We know judgment now, only in the chastening of a Heavenly Father. We shall know it hereafter only in the sentence pronounced by the Lord Jesus, when as Master of the house He returns to reckon with those who during His absence have sought to serve Him.

A. S.

ON SANCTIFICATION.—II.

THERE are two texts which speak of the sanctification of the Spirit; the one in 2 Thess. ii. 13, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth;" the other, 1 Peter i. 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." In the first of these the apostle addresses the Thessalonians as chosen by God to salvation, which election had been made manifest by the Holy Spirit separating them to God, and by their belief of the truth. Here the sanctification of the Spirit is not alluded to as a progressive work, but accom-

plished, as much so as their belief in the truth. The gospel had come to them in power and in the Holy Ghost, so that they had received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost, and had been manifestly separated from idolatry to God, to serve Him in holiness, in contrast to the uncleanness of their former lives; thus had the Spirit's sanctification of them been made apparent. In the second, Peter, writing to the strangers, commences in the same way, by alluding to their election of God, which election was unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ; and this purpose of God had been accomplished through sanctification of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost having, by means of the sprinkled blood and communication of faith, separated them from their Jewish brethren in the flesh, as saints to God.

Let it be again observed, that sanctification, as alluded to in this text also, is a finished work of the Spirit; it is not a gradual operation of the Holy Ghost—of that we shall treat hereafter.

Two passages of scripture speak of sanctification *by* or *in* the Spirit: Rom. xv. 16, "That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being *sanctified by* the Holy Ghost." The other, 1 Cor. vi. 11, "But ye are washed, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and *by* the Spirit of our God." In the former, the word translated "offering up," is the same used in the Septuagint of Psalm xl. 6, for meat-offering, *mincha* in the Hebrew, and is quoted in Hebrews x. 5, 8, "*Offering* thou wouldst not". It seems as if the apostle viewed the Gentile church converted through his agency as a new meat-offering presented to God, like the two wave-loaves on the day of Pentecost—the presence and pervading power of the Holy Ghost having sanctified these Gentile first-fruits unto God, separating them through faith in the blood of Christ from the unclean mass around. In the latter text, washing, sanctification, and justification, are as much connected with the name of Jesus, as with the Spirit of God—the Spirit having cleansed, justified, and made them holy, by connecting them with the blessed name and work of the Lord Jesus, and by taking up his abode with them.

In these Scriptures sanctification is viewed as fully accomplished through the power, agency, and presence of the Holy Spirit, cleansing the sinner by means of the blood, communicating faith and life, and thus setting him apart as holy to God. Looked upon as

redeemed by and in union with the Lord Jesus, a child of God, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, the believer is at once and for ever made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light—he is complete in Christ, and has received out of His fulness. Herein there can be no progress, it is a work accomplished; and he who is thus blessed of God is created in righteousness and true holiness. In this respect there can be no more advance in sanctification than in justification—ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified. But as the justified sinner has to make advances in practical righteousness, so also, though perfectly sanctified, he has to increase in holiness. Many are the exhortations in the word of God to this end; and the Spirit of God, as the Spirit of truth dwelling in the believer, convicts, leads, instructs, and strengthens the soul, by means of the word of God. He enlightens the conscience, discovering, by means of the Scriptures, the secret things that are hateful to God, and enabling him to eschew that which is evil and follow that which is good.

In the last wonderful pouring out of the heart to God, on behalf of His people, uttered by the blessed Lord, previous to His own baptism in death for them (John xvii.), He twice presents them to God as “not of the world, even as I am not of the world”. They were as perfectly separated to God out of the world in holiness, as the Lord Jesus Himself was; for He regarded them, in the anticipation or faith, as standing before God in the full value of his own approaching sacrifice. At the same time He prays, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.” And again, “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.”

Perfectly and eternally holy, the Lord Jesus has yet sanctified Himself through death and resurrection, so as to be, even in position, separated to God, as far as the heaven of heavens is from the earth. The believer stands in this perfect holiness, complete in Christ, but he has, by faith in the truth, practically to separate himself from the world, its uncleanness, and its defilement, and to make progress in this sanctification till at length on the morning of the resurrection he wins Christ, he is found in Him, and altogether like Him. In the above quotation we see what stress is laid by the Lord upon the word of God. He prays that the Father would sanctify them through the *truth*. He, himself, as the great High Priest, has passed into the

glory, in order that by the truth they may be sanctified. Practical holiness, freedom from the bondage of the world and Satan (John viii. 32) are only to be attained through the Scriptures of truth, under the teaching of the Spirit; the cross and the glory have sanctifying power.

Have we sufficiently considered the Scriptures in this light? are they to us as the water by which God would wash and sanctify us? and have we not too much disconnected the Holy Spirit's action within us from the word?

In 2 Cor. vii. 1, the apostle grounds the exhortation, “Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,” upon the fact of our having the promises which he had previously mentioned: thus, the very power to attain to practical holiness is made in part to depend upon our knowledge of God's blessed promises. In Rom. vii. 1, 2, we have, in like manner, a powerful exhortation to holiness, deduced from the wonderful list of God's mercies enumerated in the preceding chapters of the epistle.

Separation from evil, both within and without, is, as regards ourselves, one important feature in practical holiness. Previous to the command given to Israel by God, “Ye shall be holy, for I am holy,” (Lev. xi. 44), a catalogue of unclean beasts, birds, fishes, and creeping things, was given, that they might know how to distinguish the unclean from the clean. In some cases, the internal structure as well as the outward form of the animal must be ascertained. In other cases, the ordinary habits or appearance were at once to be sufficient indications of their unfitness for food. We must, in like manner, form our judgment as to what is holy or unholy, from the precepts laid down in the word of truth, and learn to separate the precious from the vile, if we would be holy in all manner of conversation. Things which to-day seem to us innocent or harmless, may some time hence appear, through the light of truth, to be positively evil. “Who can understand his errors, cleanse Thou me from secret faults.”

From what has been already adduced, it is manifest that the sinner, immediately he is born again, born of the Spirit, ceases to be viewed any more by God as a corrupt mass of sin and uncleanness; and is a saint, a holy one, being created anew, after the image of Him that created him. A simple though most important truth is connected with this. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit

is spirit." The two natures remain distinct and unmingled. The flesh is not improved by its proximity to the spirit; that which is born of the Spirit is not deteriorated by its nearness to the flesh; so that the work of the Holy Ghost in the believer is not a process of renovation, or improvement of that which is old—not a converting of flesh into spirit; but He acts in and with the new man, strengthening, refreshing, and leading on in knowledge and power, and enabling the child of God to keep under and mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. The carnal mind is neither eradicated nor amended, it is like an evil beast which may be fettered but not tamed. If one of the chains be removed, its violence and unsubdued energy of evil will be found strong as ever.

There is deep instruction in the words (Rom. viii. 13), "If ye *through the Spirit* do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live". The flesh can and does, to a certain extent, mortify itself, or rather some of its works. The drunkard may, from motives of expediency, abstain from indulging his lust; the covetous man may, for the sake of his reputation, become liberal; but in all these and such like mortifications there is no power of life. In monasticism and asceticism, which say, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," there is no holiness; the deeds of the body must be mortified through the Spirit; the members which are upon the earth must be put to death, through resurrection power—the affections being set on things above—and not through the antagonism of one earthly lust to another, nor for the sake of indulging one propensity at the expense of another. The wasted form of the ascetic, or the rough garment of the monk, may hide a heart as fat as grease; may conceal a soul swollen with pride and bloated with impurity. We must *walk in the Spirit* if we would not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

There are, then, two distinct operations of the Spirit. First: He communicates life through faith in Christ to the soul; thereby separating the saved sinner as a holy person to God. Next: He takes up His abode in the believer, and, through the truth of God, advances him in practical godliness and holiness. The Father, also, by His discipline, works to the same end; it being His blessed will that we should be partakers experimentally of His holiness, and bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

As in natural things the parent does not disown the

infant because of its weakness, or cast it out because its life is feeble, but expects that by care and nourishment it will make increase, and that its powers will be gradually developed: so the new-born babe in Christ is as truly a holy child of God as the most advanced saint; his life and powers will grow and make increase through the sincere milk of the word ministered by the Holy Ghost.

In conclusion, let it again be urged upon the people of God, that they more diligently read and meditate on the word of God. This is the weapon to be wielded against Satan and his temptations. This will keep us from the paths of the destroyer. This is the lamp for our feet, the truth that will cleanse us within; and we may be assured that when thus employed, the Holy Spirit is most distinctly aiding and strengthening us. "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

H. W. S.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

"Who giveth songs in the night."—Job xxxv. 10.

WE thank Thee, Saviour, for the hand,
So tender yet so strong,
That guides the pillar'd fire and cloud
Our pilgrim path along.
We thank Thee for the failing steps
Thy strength alone can stay;
For the cloud that sheds the rainbow light
Of promise on the way.

We thank Thee for the chastening love
That marks us sons of God,
We learn obedience in the path
Thine own dear footsteps trod.
We thank Thee for the wound Thy hand
And Thine alone can heal,
For the precious sympathies of God
Our deepest needs reveal.

We thank Thee for the conflict sore,
With mighty foes around;
For the whole armour of Thy strength
Which else we had not found.
We thank Thee for the weakness felt
That drives our souls on Thee,
For the whisper in our darkest hour
Of more than victory.

Soon shall we praise Thee in the light
When earth's last cloud is past,
And the gladness of Thy presence known
O'er all our future cast.
But we would hush e'en now the song
Our ransom'd lips shall raise,
When in Thy likeness evermore
We sing Thy perfect praise.

A. E. W.

BAPTISMAL TRUTH,

OR, THE TESTIMONY OF ALL BAPTISMS.

(Continued from March Number.)

WE read in the second chapter of the Acts—"Those then who gladly received his (Peter's) word were baptized". Mark well that they received the word of Peter, that is, the gospel which he preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and the immediate result of receiving this gospel was that they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and no marvel, for there was no mixture in the gospel which Peter preached, but it rendered so distinct a testimony to the Great Baptized One, Jesus Christ, that sinners convinced and converted submitted immediately to the only baptism which represents the truth, namely, immersion under water of believers only. As yet Satanic lies and counterfeits of baptism were unknown.

Likewise in the case of an individual, the eunuch, who was reading the prophet Isaiah at that passage, "But who shall declare his generation for his life was taken from the earth," (Is. liii.; Acts viii. 32, 33), Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him, Jesus, His death and resurrection.

Now, according to the Apostle Paul, baptism is burial into the death of Jesus Christ followed by resurrection. (Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12.) We are buried with Christ, that is to say, Christ has been already buried or submerged under the waters of the wrath of God, and His body has been buried in a tomb; and thus at the moment of our reception of this truth, that is, at the moment of our conversion, we are by faith identified with Christ in this burial, and we are raised again with Him in the life of resurrection. One may add that Job in the 27th chapter and 15th verse applies this expression—buried in death—to the wicked. And Christ is said to have made His grave with the wicked. In many passages the word hell or grave is applied to Christ's sufferings and humiliation, as referring to the burial of soul and body under the waters of wrath, at the cross, in a figurative sense, and the actual burial of His body in the tomb.

This great truth of death and resurrection is shown forth by an ordinance which speaks visibly to our eyes, namely, our baptism or burial under water. Thus the two baptisms, that of identification by means of faith

with Christ dead and risen, and that of immersion under water from whence we come forth again, agree perfectly and throw light one upon the other.

Doubtless the eunuch understood it, and without being required on the part of Philip, he stopped his chariot, went down into the water, was baptized and came up again out of the water, as the Holy Spirit had already said in relating the baptism of Jesus Christ (Matt. iii. 16), as if He had wished to identify with the Son of God, in thus particularly stating that the eunuch came up out of the water, the only *recorded* case, I repeat, to identify thus with the Son of God this poor Ethiopian, who belonged to a race accursed and despised.

But while more or less intelligence may accompany this act of baptism, I do not affirm that any disciple of the Lord Jesus ought to wait for a certain measure of light before submitting to it. On the contrary, when in the first days of the Church an inspired Servant of Christ declared that the baptism of believers was the commandment of the Lord, all true disciples would have submitted to it immediately, although with more or less intelligence. A servant of the Lord ought to obey without reasoning, and that immediately. It is in submission and obedience that we learn the doctrine of Christ, as Himself has said, "that if any one is willing to do the will of his Father, he shall know concerning the doctrine if it be of God". (John vii. 17). Here we have an absolute rule for the guidance of all the faithful.

But unhappily the devil has, even from the time of the Apostles, introduced into the Church the doctrines and traditions of men, so that even those redeemed by the blood of Jesus have received these lies, and have adopted the counterfeits of Satan! I do not ignore the fact that they may have fallen into this sad error in greater or less ignorance, some doubtless in entire ignorance of what they were doing. The Lord alone knows the secret thoughts of His people, and thus He alone can judge them. Nevertheless, God's word gives a principle by which all His own may judge their conduct. We find it in the 17th verse of the 5th chapter of Leviticus, where God says—"If a soul sin and commit any of those things that are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, though he *wist it not*, yet is he guilty, . . . he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord." Thus the breach of the plain commandment to all disciples to be baptized

involves guilt on the part of those who refuse, though they may be in ignorance.

Further, God has been pleased, as I do most fully believe, to throw upon this subject so little understood, even as you read these papers, a flood of precious light drawn from the Old Testament as well as the New. Also the doctrine therein developed bears a distinct testimony to Jesus only, and commends itself to the hearts and consciences of all who are willing to listen to God's Word.

From this moment, dear reader, are you not responsible before God for this light, and are you not guilty before Him if you do not submit to it?

As I have already said, the enemy, the devil has even from the earliest times introduced many erroneous doctrines which have seduced many of the servants of Christ (Rev. ii. 20), as well as bad practices which might have drawn away even the Apostle Peter, as it did Barnabas, and many others with him, had not the faithful Apostle Paul withstood him to the face. (Gal. ii. 11.) This same Apostle Paul, speaking to the overseers of the Church of Ephesus, ordained and anointed by the Holy Spirit Himself, says "that even from among themselves should men arise, speaking *perverted* things (see Greek) to draw away the disciples after themselves". (Acts xx. 30, 31.) If then these overseers could thus become instruments in the hand of the enemy, though the very companions of an Apostle, for drawing away the disciples after themselves, and if there was need that Paul should warn them during three years of this danger night and day with tears, how much more to-day have we need of this warning, lest, being drawn away by the error of the wicked, we fall from our steadfastness! (2 Peter iii. 17.) Peter speaks here of those who twist the scriptures to their own destruction. Oh, how many have there been of ministers of Satan, transformed as ministers of Christ, who have twisted this doctrine to their own destruction and that of their followers! You, the children of God, can never thus perish, but drawn away by these errors you may fall from your own steadfastness, and alas is it not true that the Church of God has already fallen! Has not the Lord said to this very Church of Ephesus—"Thou hast left thy first love, remember whence thou hast fallen and repent." (Rev. ii. 4.)

Oh that the voice of Him who alone can awaken His sleeping disciples, might make itself to be heard by

many of them, so that turning their eyes and their ears from all men, whether good or bad, they may fix them upon the Lord Jesus only and listen to the inspired words of His lips. We have to-day but one guide in whom we can repose our full confidence, namely, the written word, where every single-minded disciple may easily discover the will of His Lord, coming to that word sincerely to learn of Him.

In the first days of the Church, I repeat, inspired men commanded this baptism of believers, and all submitted to it. To-day the inspired scriptures command this same baptism of believers, and all the faithful ought at once to obey. Even though some have attempted to deduce infant baptism from the fact that households were baptised, none have ever or can ever find one *commandment* for such baptism of infants in the word of God.

Although God may have compassion on the ignorant, yet ignorance is never an excuse for neglecting His will. On the contrary, the servant who knew not the will of His Lord and did it not, shall be beaten though with few stripes. Dear reader, are you really ignorant of the will of your Lord concerning baptism, and, if you remain ignorant of it, are you not willingly ignorant? But remember what happened to the servant who knew His Lord's will and did it not. (Luke xii. 47). Alas, it is too easy to-day to be ashamed of the Great Baptized One, Jesus Christ, and with Him of the baptism which He has ordained, and to turn away from the Truth to follow a worldly Christ, another Christ, a worldly baptism, another baptism; but how then can you be a disciple indeed of Jesus Christ? You make too much of this baptism, may say some of my readers. No, but I insist upon obedience to this commandment as being the first act of the disciple of the Lord, and upon the danger of disobedience and the loss which may result therefrom. Reader, have you submitted to it, and do you know something of its power (Mark xvi. 16), and can you now view indifferently the neglect or perversion of it? Or indeed have you never submitted to this ordinance? Then how can you judge of its importance! Permit me to tell you faithfully and affectionately, that as regards this truth at least, whoever you may be, you are blind.

As the perversion of this truth has been an immense source of evil in the Church of God and in the world, so the truth restored shall be a mighty source of, and power for, blessing. There are two Spirits that know

what is the power of baptism, the Spirit of Christ, that passed through the baptismal wrath of Calvary, and the Spirit of evil, that knows he will ere long be baptized in the lake of fire. This Spirit of evil, the Devil, never sleeps, he knows well the power of this truth, and he tries with all his might and subtlety to darken it and to make counterfeits. He has too well succeeded, so that some children of God who have most deeply studied the letter of Scripture, but of whom there is indeed too much reason to fear that they have far abandoned their first love, have grievously turned aside from this truth of believers' baptism and occupy themselves in the hands of the enemy with introducing anew in the meetings of Christians the old counterfeit, though a little modified, of the baptism of new-born children! But they have employed the very word of God and misinterpreted it in order to sustain this as well as other sad practices, and the light for them has become darkness!

In passing, I might remark that these persons teach that a babe is brought into the Kingdom of God by baptism, and thus into a "sort of outer sphere of the operations of the Holy Spirit," and that it is thus in a position to be brought afterwards into the "inner sphere of the Church of God"! That is to say, brought nearer to God by an *act* of man, a principle essentially Romanist and tending utterly to subvert that faith by which alone we can ourselves approach unto God or bring to Him those dear to us. Further, the babe not having yet been united by faith to Him who died and rose again, its baptism is not baptism into Jesus Christ, but another baptism which is not baptism, for there be some that trouble us.

Cease ye from man here below; there ever remains to us the man Christ Jesus, neglected and almost abandoned by many who profess to be His, and who in their ignorance follow other leaders and seek in vain the True Bread which alone can satisfy their need. But although we are so unfaithful, the Lord remaineth faithful, and once again in the last of these last days, He sends forth clothed with new light this precious truth of believers' baptism. He shows Himself as the Great Baptized One, who has so much suffered for us in the baptism of the Cross, and to whom all the baptisms recorded in the Scriptures bear so invariable and striking a testimony, and He bids us all, His disciples, take up our cross in submitting to the baptism of water and to follow Him.

M. T. B.

THE POSSESSION OF THE SPIRIT.

NOTE No. III.

THE Epistle to the Romans is addressed, "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints". We know who these were—just those who simply believed in Jesus, as we do who trust in Him—ordinary Christians like ourselves. We find in this Epistle the truth concerning the Spirit more clearly developed. In the 8th chapter there is drawn the grand distinction between the spiritual and the natural; "they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit". (Rom. viii. 5.) This principle is set forth (ver. 14,) "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The essential thing is that "the Spirit of God dwell in you" (ver. 9). Without that we are nothing. For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His". Not that this is any difficulty that need be feared, or that need cause anxiety. Such a feeling is too prone to take possession of us—whether it be from old associations or old habits. Ah! no. The Spirit of God is "the Spirit of adoption" (ver. 15), the Spirit of Sonship, whereby we cry in our difficulties or in our fears "Abba, Father". It is not the spirit of bondage. It is not the spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

So far from abject terror, or doubt, or darkness, or hesitation being suitable to our case—when we trust in Christ, with simple faith—the simplicity of faith is its grandest quality—"the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God" (ver. 16). Oh! what a glorious privilege; but there is added still more "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together". Even greater than all this, however—it ascends by degrees—are our privileges, with regard to the Holy Spirit of God, this Divine Comforter whom Jesus hath sent and who is with every child of God that reads this paper. Our very weakness is made a source of blessing and grace for it is farther written (ver. 26), "Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts"

noweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He taketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." We have, thus, two intercessors or advocates—one up yonder before the Throne, at the right hand of God, Jesus the Great High Priest within the veil, thither He has for us entered, interceding for us, presenting His wounded hands and pierced side, with the shed blood—all-powerful pleas; and down here, in our hearts, giving utterance in His own way to the consuming unutterable desires, craving for what we cannot express; giving voice to the incoherent groanings of our spirits—longing for confession to God—longing for His grace and presence—longing for the coming again of the Lord Jesus; helping us to speak—giving interpretation to our tears—stirring up the spirit of praise—moving our heart of joy—quickening us in our inmost nature to "seek after" God. Such is the wonderful provision that our Saviour has secured for us—such the amazing grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and with us! For his own word tells us that we are "the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us". (1 Cor. iii. 16.)

Dear Reader, have you thoroughly realised the truths with which we have been dealing, and have you experienced, in your heart, the indwelling and the gracious influence of which we have been speaking. Many dear Christians are groping as in the twilight. They are not quite in the darkness like those disciples of old who knew not whether there was any Holy Spirit. In our day there is an insufficiency of approach to the Divine word, and a consequent want of familiarity with its blessed truths; and there is a want of singleness of mind in what acceptance of the word there is. If this has been the case with you let it be so no longer. The Holy Spirit speaks to you through the word. The word is His voice. It breathes His inspiration. He gives no supernatural manifestation of Himself; but He produces a supernatural manifestation of truth to your mind and heart, and a supernatural change in both. He is the Author of the new birth, the Maker of the new creation, the Teacher who leads into all truth.

Does this teaching seem very strong to any reader?—do we appear very bold in assuming to be possessed of the Divine gift? Ah! friend, it is no presumption to be where God puts us and to be what God makes us. The presumption is in refusing! It is a kind of fatuity to hang back! Let us rest satisfied and take

His truth as taught in His written word. And if God in very deed condescends to dwell with us, unworthy sinners of mankind, through the infinite worth of His dear Son's sacrifice, let us not imagine that it is assuming too much to be possessed of His Spirit. Here, as in every line of the divine life in the soul, obedience is the touchstone of character, the test of faith, the balance of judgment. Let us rather honour and glorify the Holy Spirit by submission to His truth, loving His presence, and accepting His teaching in the word. When the word speaks of the "fellowship of the Spirit", let us yield ourselves to Him, a complete surrender of body, soul, and spirit, to His grace and power. When the word speaks (2 Cor. xiii. 14) of the love—the infinite love of the Father; the grace—the free grace and dying love of Christ; and the communion—the union together with ourselves of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son. Let us freely give ourselves up to this communion, and live in it so that we may indeed be holy as He is, and love His presence with all our heart, strength, and soul, and show forth His praise and power—in a holy life, unto the salvation of those that are perishing. R. S.

THE BELIEVER IN HEAVENLY PLACES.

DOUBTLESS not a few will take up this paper, who know far more, both in doctrine and experience of this blessed truth than the writer, and who are also practically living under its power; we thank God for all such, and may He greatly increase their number.

There are also those, it is to be feared, who only know this truth as a doctrine, but have never entered into it experimentally so as to produce a corresponding heavenly walk. Their heads have gone before their hearts, and truth that ought to lead to deepest humility, has only "puffed up." Instead of helping their growth in grace, it has greatly hindered it, and fostered in them the Laodicean character, "rich and increased with goods and having need of nothing". Dear reader, do you belong to this class? Have you learnt your position in a glorified Christ in your heart by the Holy Ghost; or have you only learnt it as a theory from men's writings? If that is all you have got—better, far better, that you had never heard of it. A Christian who doubts his salvation is far more likely to be restored to fellowship with God, than one who

has learnt truth about *position*—either heavenly or earthly—but whose *heart* is away from God. It would be an unspeakable blessing to many a dear child of God, if they would go to their knees before the Lord and *empty* their souls of *all* their *theology* and begin to read their Bibles as if they *knew nothing*; even as new-born babes.

There is yet another class who have a vague apprehension that there is something better in Christianity than they have arrived at, but somehow they cannot get hold of it. They have now and again a sweet sense of blessing and liberty; but they scarcely know how they got it, and far less do they know how to keep it. It is with a view to help such that these lines are penned—may God grant His blessing both in writing and reading. Before going further, let me say that real, healthy Christian experience is produced in the soul by understanding, and believing the Christian's blessing and portion in Christ. The actual experience of many Christians—indeed of all to some extent—is the result of ignorance, and *unbelief*. But true *Christian* experience is that feeling which is produced in the soul by believing what God has said, and understanding what He means. The great secret of learning spiritual truth is to allow *faith always to lead*, and let all the other faculties of the soul follow in their proper order. Every Christian knows that this was the way we entered the "straight gate" at first, but every Christian does not know that this is the only way of getting joyfully along the "narrow way" to the very end of the journey. Let us then dear reader, in the power of grace, allow our faith to go first, and our reason and understanding to follow; and if we do so we will have very few difficulties with any truth which God has revealed.

We might first glance at the truth of Jesus Christ being in heaven *for us*. This is taught in the epistle to the Hebrews, especially chap. ix., ver. 24, where we read that Christ "is entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God *for us*," or on our behalf. Were there no other sense in which we are even now in heaven, than by *representation*, this of itself might well cause our hearts to sing for joy when we reflect on who is our representative, that He is both the SON OF GOD, and also the SON OF MAN—the well-beloved Son whom the Father heareth always, and also Him who loved *us* and gave Himself for *us*. May the Holy Ghost lead us who have rested in the *finished* work of Christ to have the same unwavering faith in

His *unfinished* work! Many Saints who have no doubt as to the perfection of His work when He "appeared to put away sin," fail very much in exercising faith in His power to maintain our acceptance, and to keep us clean by His appearing now in the presence of God *for us*. Are you, dear reader, trying to walk alone, or has your conscience known the power, and your heart the sweetness of confiding in His power to "*keep you from falling*" and to *restore you* should you fall as you trust in the efficacy of His one sacrifice on the Cross? There may be seasons of joy to the believer, but these will be uncertain and short lived, unless he has learned his need of and has proved the power of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He now appears before God on behalf of every one of those who believe on His name. But in the Epistle to the Ephesians there is something more, or something distinct from Christ being now in heaven *for us*. There are two expressions that seem to be a key to this Epistle, the word "heavenly" and the two little words—"in Him". If we read carefully over the first two chapters we cannot fail to see that the expression—"in Him" is the key that opens the treasury of infinite riches therein revealed. There are in this Epistle four subjects specially treated of, heavenly *position*, heavenly *state*, heavenly *walk*, and heavenly *warfare*. And notice the order in which they are taught, first position, then state, then walk, and then warfare; the exact reverse of how we often try to put them. We would first begin to fight, and having disposed of our spiritual enemies we would then be able to walk better—through that we would *attain* to a better state—and through it we would be able to enjoy or *realise* our true position. *Sense* begins at the foot of the ladder and tries to climb up; but *faith* reckoning with God begins at the top and comes down, filled with heavenly thoughts and clothed with heavenly power,—with simplicity and firmness lays hold of her place *in Him* and her blessing *in Him* seeks to find out what that is and where He is, and without any reasoning, sits down in her place and feasts on her blessing. The great obstacle to our enjoying our heavenly position is unbelief, *reasoning* instead of *believing*.

To use an illustration: we entered the front door by *believing*, and the door of every store-room of blessing is opened by the same key, and will give way before no other power but the power of faith. Many saints are kept out of the enjoyment of much precious bless-

same way as sinners are often held back from the Christ; they want to *feel* before *they believe*. No truth in revelation requires more humiplicity of trust than the believer's position *now* in the heavenlies. We might also special difficulties that stand in the way of it, that of being confused by the thought of *distance*. Now it is true that Jesus Christ was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of sight" (Acts i. 9); but the thought in Ephesians is so much that of His ascension from earth as the thought of *rank* or degree of dignity. He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion" (Eph. i. 21); and by virtue of our relationship to Him nearest Him of all created beings; and when He "world knoweth us not," we are really sons of God by birth; and being sons we are heirs with the FIRST BEGOTTEN from the

another aspect of the truth which might be seen by referring to Noah and his family in the ark. He went into the ark and the Lord shut him in. When the ark rose upon the waters fifteen cubits above the mountains, Noah and his family were fifteen cubits above them too, because they were

And in the purpose and mind of God the Son is as really in Christ when he was quickened, and seated on high, as Noah and his family in the ark; and there is no room for reasoning that we have simply to believe it, and then, then, will we enjoy it. There is another way of many receiving and enjoying the truth, and that is, its reception would be the mortification of the flesh. Many Christians at this truth, and many more hold it only because its enjoyment will not admit of worldly habits of feeling, thought, and conversation. This is the great reason why so very few enter and live in it experimentally, because of the heart and life that it involves, and when it is laid before them the devil keeps them looking away. They would *lose*, and seeks to blind them to what they would *gain*, by taking their place and sitting in Christ Jesus in the presence of God, and walking in the power of perfect love there. We repeat, there are comparatively

few Christians who really know and enjoy this truth, because of the holiness of heart and life which it involves. Sin is so deceitful, that they are ignorant of the real cause of their spiritual bondage and barrenness. Some maintain that God meant His children to spend their life down here groaning under the power of sin. Others blame the circumstances and associations of their life, while others cry out about want of proper teaching. But the real cause in most cases is, that the flesh has been pampered until it has fairly got the upper hand. The devil knows quite well that Christians living on the mount with God would do deadly damage to his kingdom, therefore he keeps them under his power, by concealing from them the real cause of their want of joy and strength—that is, their *carnality*. Again, many who have some discernment of how carnal they are, are engaged in trying to *improve* the flesh, instead of entering by faith into the enjoyment of their heavenly blessing, and leaving *the flesh outside* to starve, while they are feasting in the very presence of God on the "all spiritual blessings," with which He "hath blessed us in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". In conclusion, let us bear in mind that every soul who has been quickened together with Christ, has also been raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. It is *not* a thing of *attainment*; we do not attain to it as we grow in grace and knowledge; it is what God has said regarding every soul whom He has quickened together with Christ; and the way to enjoy it is just the way we enjoyed the gospel at first, *i.e.*, believe it because God has said it.

The truth of the believer's position in Christ in heavenly places is not one that we can get on *with* or *without*; and if you, dear reader, are not living in the enjoyment and power of your place and acceptance in Christ before God, I have no need to ask about your *state*, your *walk*, or your *warfare*. I know none of these will be heavenly if your soul is not dwelling in the liberty and power of your heavenly position.

G. A.

COMMUNION.—"I suppose our communion is very much influenced by our knowledge of God in Christ gathered from the word itself." Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly "and then we shall have such enjoyment in communion that out of us will come psalms and hymns and spiritual songs".

ON "SPIRITUAL GIFTS,"

I CORINTHIANS xii.

IN this Scripture, we are taught that before our conversion, we were at the mercy of evil spirits (verse 3), and as we read in Ephes. ii. our course was according to this age, under the guidance of the "prince of the power of the air".

But 1 Cor. xii. 3, indicates we are delivered, in owning Jesus as *Lord*, and now are under the guidance of His Word and Spirit.

There are different gifts but the same Spirit (verse 4), and while there are different ministries or services each of the servants is responsible to one Lord in the exercise of his ministry (verse 5); and the different operations, are the workings of that one God, who worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure—the Church of God being intended to be, an anticipative picture of that day, when God shall be all in all. (1 Cor. xv. 28, compare Ephes. iii. 9, 10).

In verse 7th we read, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal"—or, as it might be put, the manifestation, or, the result of the working of the Spirit in a man, is given for the profit of all.

For instance, as the *manifestation* of the Sun is *light*, and that light is given for our profit, so also the Word or act, in the power of the Spirit, is given for the profit of all. (1 Cor. xiv. 25.) Therefore, all gift in the Church is an expression of God's love. Christ the *unspeakable* gift, but Paul, Apollos, Phoebe, or Luther, nevertheless *gifts*.

From verse 8 to 10, we have an enumeration of the gifts, in the gifted men.

The Word of *Wisdom*—this came to us by the *Apostles*, they spake the Wisdom of God in a mystery, (1 Cor. ii. 7), Paul pre-eminently (2 Peter iii. 15).

Only through the Word by Apostles, have we come to the knowledge of Christ, the Wisdom of God, and so, when Paul could say "it is preached to every creature under heaven" Proverbs viii. 31 to end, was fully exemplified.

Following in the wake of the Word of Wisdom, comes the Word of Knowledge, through the teacher.

The Apostle's Word, is that on which our faith rests (Ephes. ii. 20), the teacher's gift is but the knowledge of the Apostle's word, and ability to impart it.

Paul had given to Timothy words *directly* from Christ, the Word of Wisdom (2 Tim. iii. 14), and he

is exhorted to continue in them, and to commit these words to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also. (2 Tim. ii. 2).

Another gift is faith (1 Cor. xii. 9), not what is termed "saving faith," though that also is a gift (Ephes. ii. 8), but that unwavering trust in God, which was seen in our Lord in perfection. But this faith is by the same Spirit, that brought all things to the Apostle's memory, to write for us, or opened the teacher's understanding that he might impart to us. Healing and miracles follow, then *prophecy*, which is just the same gift as seen in Old Testament prophets, that is, a man speaking as he is moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter i. 21), or as David puts it "The Spirit of God spake by me".

Therefore, there is a wide distinction between this gift, and any we now see in the Church of God, for, it is one thing to speak *in the Spirit* (using words which the Holy Ghost wrote long ago in Genesis or Revelation), and quite a different thing to be as it were the mouthpiece of the Spirit, to utter a fresh *revelation*, as a prophet did, in which case, all minor gift had to give place that *God* might speak (1 Cor. xiv. 30).

Thus in Acts xiii. the Holy Ghost names Barnabas and Saul for a certain work, but verse 1 tells us of certain *prophets* through whom He did so—it was quite beyond the sphere of the teacher, whose gift lies in unfolding what is *already revealed*.

We need not consider how far many of the gifts herein enumerated, are *now* in the Church. Suffice it to say, that one object of the display of miraculous (so-called) gifts was, *to authenticate the Word* as from God (Heb. ii. 3-4), the Jews required a *sign*, God gave it.

In verse eleven we read, "God hath set the members in the body, *as it hath pleased Him*. It is worthy of note, that in this chapter, as in Romans xii.—the figure of the body is brought in, connected with *service*—it is used to show how God would have the service of each member contribute to the good of the whole.

In the human body, *need* draws out the action of the members towards each other, and God is glorified in the efficient service of each to the whole.

Even so it ought to be in the mystical body of Christ, *need* should ever set to work those who are set in the body *to meet that need*, and God is glorified in the healthy action of each member.

This scripture, taken along with Matt. xxv. 15, "ac-

rding to their several ability," clearly teaches that, far from a man full of the Holy Ghost, being fit for *! kinds* of service, he is only fit to be used according to the place and function which pertains to him in the body, measure in which he has exercised those natural gifts, as we speak, but which are really spiritual when in subjection to the Spirit of God, even the whole man is spiritual, just as he is subject. (1 Cor. xiv. 37.)

The Spirit of God will not as a rule use a vessel, beyond Creator—given ability—a teacher, besides following the directions of 2 Tim. iii. 15 to 17, must be *to* teach, that is, have what we term a natural attitude to impart knowledge, which is as truly a gift as any other.

Barnabas was a man full of the Holy Ghost, and in Acts xi. 22 to end, we find him acting *in the Spirit*—not only looking at his own capacity, but at the capacity of Paul (Phil. ii. 4), and therefore doing nothing through strife or vain glory, and he at once goes in search of Paul, whom he discerns better fitted for the work to be done.

In the human body, let but a thorn get into the foot, and at once the arm, hands, and fingers set to work to get it out, the work is done, because the right members go to work.

This is the teaching of Romans xii. and 1 Cor. xii., which draws forth God-given and God-fitted help towards the weak member.

Is it so in the Church of God, or are we more occupied with what is pleasant than in answering the call of *need*?

But whether pastors and teachers own it or not, God hath set them in the body as it hath pleased Him, and at what a cost, ere one could occupy His place in the body, the Saviour of the body must die, and every member, from the cradle to the grave, has been moulded and fashioned for the place in which He is set in the body.

Paul's great aim was not only to teach the truth of the one body, but to make all see what is the *stewardship* of the mystery, to the intent, that *now*, unto the principalities and powers, might be known by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, in providing through each member what met every need in the body. Thus, had the Church been faithful, the glory of God would have been manifested, and His manifold wisdom declared as truly as sun, moon, and stars in

another sphere, declare that glory, by simply keeping the place assigned by infinite love.

How fully Paul answered to this! the care of all saints lay heavily on his heart, and the least appearance of anything calling for the exercise of his functions as a member of the body, was sufficient to find him at his post, whether the writing of 1 Corinthians, or the conveying of money to poor saints, that so the love of Christ *might be seen*. No selfish thought kept him back, he wasted not his precious hours in tears, but put forth his willing hand to help, as pleased to be a messenger of the churches if only God be glorified, as to tell out his knowledge of the deep mystery of Christ.

May we awake to the meaning of the figure of the one body, as displayed in 1 Corinthians xii., and Romans xii., thinking soberly in God's presence, what place we are set in, in the body, and as the hands wait till needed, *but are ever ready when needed*, so may we wait, and be content to wait, but at the same time see that no cry of need should reach the ear of God without His eye at the same time, *discerning the members designed by Him to meet the need, fulfilling their function in the body*. Thus, even now, may His manifold wisdom be seen by unseen ones, and God be glorified in us.

T. C.

GOD'S CHOICE NOT MAN'S.

OR,

DAVID CHOSEN FOR ISRAEL.

MOST thoughtful Christians admit the value of the historical parts of God's Word. Like all other parts they are not really understood or valued by the natural man. It is true many, old and young, have natural pleasure in reading certain parts of it, but even such do not perceive their true value. None but those who know God in truth can; because the real value of history is that it reveals God and manifests man. It was written for our learning; whether therefore it is the history of an individual, a family, a nation, or of the world, of a believer, or an unbeliever, we may expect profit from reading it.

Of him who is the immediate subject of this paper, David, we know scarce anything until the time of his anointing by Samuel. A brief notice of him is taken in the book of Ruth (chap. iv. 18 verse), where his descent is traced from Pharez of Tamar. Like most remarkable men, he suddenly appears in public as one

whom Jehovah has been preparing for Himself to be brought forth when needed, at a time when he would be valued.

Moses was eighty years preparing for forty years service. Of Elijah, we know nothing until he stood boldly out in the presence of the idolatrous King, Ahab, and predicted the judgment of God by drought. "As Jehovah, God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" were his first recorded words. This was the summary of his life; to stand before Jehovah, to hear and declare His words. Beloved, this also is the real value of ours. It was thus with David. That which first made him prominent, was his anointing in order to the kingdom, while as yet Saul, although rejected, was reigning. The true David, the Lord Jesus, who spent thirty out of thirty-three years in comparative privacy was, by His baptism and the descent of the spirit, made manifest to John and to Israel.

The time of David's anointing was a remarkable time. Israel having become tired of Theocracy, having rejected God, *they* had chosen a man to be their King. They had tasted a little of the bitter fruit, and Jehovah, who had given Saul in anger, was about to take him away in His wrath.

Saul, for his impatience in offering sacrifice, and disobedience in sparing Agag, the Amalekite, was wasting under the judgment of God, having forfeited the kingdom. Samuel was mourning for this, when Jehovah suddenly remonstrated with him, and sent him to Bethlehem to anoint a King in Saul's place. Samuel hesitated, stating difficulties which were over-ruled, and he, in obedience to Jehovah's word, went to Bethlehem, and called Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice; one of those sons was to be chosen King. Jesse, father-like, no doubt, was delighted to present his sons to the Man of God. When assembled Samuel looked on them, and, fixing on Eliab the firstborn, said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." Age and personal appearance, doubtless were in his favour, but he was not the chosen of God. Jehovah gently remonstrated with the prophet, instructing him not to look on countenance nor height of stature. "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart." Jesse then caused Abinadab, and again Shammah, and at length all present passed, and were refused. Doubtless, those young men were the subjects of thought, enquiry, astonishment, and perhaps

disappointment as they advanced, stood, and retired. Samuel then enquired if all Jesse's sons were present, and he said, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he *keepeth the sheep*." And Samuel said unto Jesse, "send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither."

David, the beloved, was brought. "He was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, fair of eyes, and goodly to look to; and the Lord said, arise, anoint him for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." The errand accomplished, the King chosen, Samuel returned to Ramah. The family returned to their home, but who shall tell what their thoughts and feelings were; what of God, and what of nature. This only is recorded—"The Spirit of Jehovah came upon David from that day forward"—of Saul it is written, "But the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him".

Thus Jehovah made His choice according to His knowledge of the heart. He whose occupation was that of a shepherd caring for the lambs and sheep, was in training for his future position as the King of Israel, the feeder and ruler of Jehovah's flock. (Ps. lxxviii. 70), &c.

David was God's man, while Saul was the people's choice; David was a type of the Christ, Saul of the Antichrist; Saul was the man of the earth; David the chosen of God. Like all who have foreshadowed the Antichrist, Saul would have taken the precedence with man; while the man of Jehovah's choice would have been passed by—even Samuel was mistaken in the man. Cain, Adam's first-born, I imagine, would have been more important than Abel; that Esau would naturally have been preferred to Jacob is certain; and while the Christ of God was disowned and rejected, all the world will wonder after the beast, who will indeed be "*the man of the earth*," as it is written, "That the man of the earth no more oppress". (Ps. x. 8.)

The choice of God is separation to Himself, and leads in a path of trial of faith and patience. Honour and trial go together here, and doubtless David's first step in honour was a step into trial. Satan who is ever seeking to do mischief, would not fail to bring in, if allowed of God, trial in David's family, and that, by the very honour God had put upon him. Whatever Jesse may have felt of pleasure and gratitude, Eliab's

words spoken soon after imply much, "I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart". David, had to learn, even as Joseph had experienced before, that honour from God provokes envy, even in a brother's heart. In this David tasted beforehand his sorrows, of whom it is said, "Neither did His brethren believe in Him," who Himself said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household".

Saul went on his way, and David retired to the sheepfold to prepare for his next appearance in public, to our beloved departed brother, J. L. Harris, has named it, "The School of God"; and who teacheth like Him? Dullness in us does not provoke Him, nor severity in Him discourage us. He may teach us through others, but reserves to Himself the special discipline of each believing soul. The sheepfold was the very place to learn how to rule men. There David had to go after the wandering, care for the sick, nurse the lambs, and prudently feed the entire flock. Here so he learnt the ways of Jehovah, as the shepherd, and who shall say that he did not, while tending his flock, touch the harp and sing, "Jehovah is my shepherd, I shall not want," &c.

The twenty-third Psalm has for years been to me a roof that Christians can commune with God in their dwelling. Surely if they do not, there must be something wrong either in their spirit or their calling.

David, the anointed one, went forward in obedience to his father, while another reigned. Young as he was he was as a man of faith, trusting Jehovah with his future, and waiting his turn for the crown and kingdom. His antitype was "Born king of the Jews". He in Nazareth, with the full knowledge of His dignity, was subject to Joseph and his Mother, doing his Father's business while another reigned, neither would He have the kingdom, save in God's time and way. He fulfilled his course of obedience to the Father's will even unto death, and although taken by the Jewish rulers and crucified, slain by wicked Gentile hands, died under the title "King of the Jews". When wicked hands had crucified Him, and loving hands had buried Him, God raised Him from the dead, and in due time received him up into heaven and enthroned Him at His right hand. Thus we see again, the refused by man accepted of God, or God's choice not man's. H. H.

DANGER.—Sunken rocks are more dangerous than open ones. Satan hides from us, if possible, the snares he has set to entrap us.

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11 till 1:15.—Praise, Prayer, and Ministry of the Word of God.
1:45.—Refreshments for those from Country and Suburbs.
3 till 5.—CONFERENCE. Subject—Eph. iv. 7-16.
6 till 8:30.—Ministry of the Word, with Special Reference to Young Believers.

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SHADOWS OF CHRIST.

THE MANNA.

PART XV.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven."

John vi. 51.

FROM Egypt to Canaan was but a short journey, it might have been accomplished in a fortnight (see Deut. i. 2), but God had lessons to teach His people in the wilderness of more value to them and to all succeeding generations of the faithful, than a speedy entrance into the land of promise.

They knew not their own hearts, and they knew not the heart of God. Therefore it is written, "the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee and to prove thee to know *what was in thine heart*, whether thou wouldst keep this commandments or no; and He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live". (Deut. viii. 2, 3.)

Thus Israel's first journey after their victory song at the Red Sea was one of trial. Three days they journeyed and found no water, and when at length the water was reached it was bitter, and they could not drink it. And is not such very frequently the experience of new born souls. As soon as they have rejoiced in new found pardon, peace, and liberty, they find themselves face to face with trials and difficulties, oppositions and temptations unknown to them before. But wherefore is this? Witness the result in the case

of Israel. The trial drew forth bitter murmuring. It manifested the deep-rooted unbelief of the heart, ever ready to spring up into rebellion and accusation against God.

But this manifestation of Israel's unbelief was also the occasion of the revealing to them of Jehovah's grace. They find that God is sufficient for them in the dry and thirsty land as well as at the Red Sea; they find that with the temptation, He also makes a way of escape that they may be able to bear it—they know Him as "Jehovah Rophi." "I am the Lord that healeth thee."

Thus it may have been with some who read this paper. The trial of surrounding wilderness circumstances may have found them off their guard. They fret and chafe and murmur at the *circumstances* (as they suppose) when really they are murmuring and rebelling against the God who has appointed the circumstances in perfect love and wisdom.

Evil is thus discovered to be only dormant within. The desperate wickedness of the heart which seemed to be subdued or eradicated, is found to be only a latent force awaiting the spark of trial to cause it to burst forth in flame. Such discoveries are ever painful, and through ignorance of God may sink the soul in despair. But let it be remembered that however unexpected and alarming such discoveries of the evil within may be to the child of God—it has all been known before to God. The trial did not reveal it to Him but to us; and only as the believer learns by experience what the corruption of his own nature is, can he estimate aright the grace that has known and provided for it all, so that even the murmur of unbelief is hushed by a fresh outpouring of blessing.

A little respite is given at Elim. The wells and the palm trees affording refreshment and shade; and who does not know the mercy that provides such seasons even in the wilderness; but Elim is not Canaan, and soon they are called away to another journey and another experience.

The path in which God leads His people is always new. Of every day's experience it may be said as of Israel at Jordan, "ye have not passed this way heretofore". The God of salvation and of all grace is also the God of providence, and He orders the circumstances and events of every day so as best to discipline His people in the lessons He would have them learn. If daily trials and daily blessings were met in the assured belief of this, how differently would they be borne? Instead of this daily grace being received to a large extent in vain, it would issue in fruitfulness to the glory of God. The foe would be met in the confidence that victory is secured; the thirst would be borne in the assurance that water is at hand, and the bitterness would be patiently endured, knowing that it is but for a moment, and soon Jehovah Rophi will appear to sweeten the bitter and to cheer the faint.

Israel's next journey brought them to the Wilderness of Sin. It was the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from Egypt. By this time doubtless the unleavened cakes would be all consumed, which they had baked of the dough which they brought forth from Egypt. (Ex. xii. 39.) The good land flowing with milk and honey was as far off as ever. "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them." Nevertheless, Jehovah was leading them by "*a right way*"; but again unbelief broke forth as at Marah, and even more bitterly and more directly against the Lord.

Most gracious was the response of Jehovah, "Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you". (Ex. xvi. 4.) "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Thus are they made *dependent on Jehovah alone*. For their daily bread they are taught to look directly to their covenant God. Nor is any lesson so important or when learned, so blessed and fruitful as this. It was the special feature of the life of the Son of God on earth, and therefore would He have it to characterize us; "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he, shall live by Me". (John vi. 57.) Thus as he taught them to pray, He fastened on them the same lesson, "Give us this day

our daily bread". Not bread for a year or a month or a week, but bread for the day. Likewise would He teach us in all things to live by the day. "Take no thought for the morrow—i.e., let not the burden that belongs to-morrow come in to oppress to-day. So there is the daily renewing of the inner man (2 Cor. iv. 16) by the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of daily heavenly bread to the weary soul, and this in order to strengthen for the taking up of the "daily" cross. (Luke ix. 23.)

But this lesson of continual dependence on the grace of a never-failing God was specially pressed on Israel by the manner in which the heavenly bread was given.

It was the gift of God unmerited and unasked, like the heavenly gift we now enjoy without money and without price—as free as the air, the sunshine, or the rain.

And not only was it given apart from the labour of their hands, and thus contrasted with the conditions imposed on Adam at his expulsion from Eden, "by the sweat of thy brow shall thou earn thy bread"—but in connection with it God gave them also the Sabbath; He even commanded them to rest, and assured their hearts by giving them on the sixth day the bread of two days. How completely this told out the grace into which redemption had brought them.

Moreover, it was given at night. While the camp was folded in sleep, Jehovah, the keeper of Israel, who slumbers not nor sleeps, was providing for the murmuring children the sustenance of the day. Forty years did they grieve Him with incessant provocations, but never one morning did Jehovah fail to provide the daily bread. Upwards of fourteen thousand mornings was Jehovah their willing provider—yet they knew Him not. Perhaps they came to regard it as a kind of natural phenomenon—certain it is they came to esteem it lightly.

And such is the tendency of the heart if not under the control of grace. Neither temporal nor spiritual blessings are discovered as coming from the hand of a Father in heaven—hence they are received as common things without thankfulness—God is robbed of His glory, and blessing is restrained.

When the sun waxed hot it melted away. Thus by a further arrangement were they taught not only the lesson of dependence, but also of diligence. Whilst in no sense was it the product of their labour, yet was it not gathered without diligence—nay it was to be the

first thing—they that sought it early would find it, those that sought it late would suffer need.

And is it not thus with the believer and his enjoyment of Christ as the food of his soul? Christ is indeed the gift of God freely bestowed and freely received. He is the bread that came down from heaven. The Bread of God; the Bread of Life. But to feed upon Him so as to be strengthened in soul, implies a coming diligently to the Written Word, and a willing reception of the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

The renewing day by day of the inner man is as essential as the renewing day by day of the worn out energies of our physical frame. In this spiritual renewing Christ is the food; the Scriptures are the medium through which Christ is ministered to the soul, and the Holy Ghost is the Teacher, Comforter, Enlightener, and Guide, whose work it is to unfold to the waiting and diligent soul the love and wisdom, the power and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But true spiritual appetite is rare amid the hurry and din, and bustle, and ceaseless activity of the nineteenth century life. Few there are who awake to gather, and fewer still who sit down to feed in daily blessed communion upon the Bread of God. Hence the leanness and barrenness so often deplored. It is not so much the lack of knowledge. Knowledge gathered by others and received "second hand" is like manna gathered by the diligent in the fresh and early morn, and set before the sluggard only to prove that his laziness has deprived him of appetite for the heavenly bread. The diligent gatherer finds the relish for the Manna to grow even as he gathers, whilst the slothful who depends on the gatherings of others, falls drowsy as he seeks to feed. And not only so, the effect of the precious word of God known, but not fed on, is shewn in the Manna gathered but not used. It bred worms and stank. To God it savours of corruption and death. Oh, the abomination of truth learned by rote and kept in the head, but never fed on to the nourishing of the soul.

Instead of sanctifying, it breeds corruption, it becomes the knowledge that puffeth up—it yields the stench of spiritual conceit, and pride, and self-righteousness, and the worms that eat out the very vitals of Christianity. Let the children of God beware of the abuse of God's precious word. If it does not nourish, it weakens; if it does not humble, it puffs up; if it does not sanctify, it condemns.

Every characteristic of the Manna combined to render it a striking type of Christ as the Heavenly Bread for a wilderness people. It was "small," and therefore the very opposite of what the world applauds. It was a mystery to Israel, they knew it not, as its name indicates, for they said "What is this?" It was white, indicating its purity; it lay upon the ground accessible to all—to be gathered or else to be trodden under foot. It was sweet like honey, and again it was like fresh oil. It was full of nourishment, so that there need not have been one feeble person among all the tribes of Israel. All this tells of Him who in the days of His humiliation was despised and rejected of men, yet by the believing ones fed upon, and found to be life and nourishment, sweetness and joy. "He was in the world, and the world knew Him not." They said, "who is this?" He came down to the level of the deepest need of the greatest sinner, in order that He might be a Saviour within the reach of all.

The Lord commanded that an homer should be filled with this heavenly food and kept for the generations of Israel that they might see the bread wherewith the Lord had fed them in the wilderness.

It was "a golden pot," and it was laid up "in the Holiest of all". See Heb. ix. 3, 4. What a contrast! Once lying on the cold earth, wet with the dews of night, or melted with the noon-day sun; gathered by the hungry or trampled on by the full; now treasured in the golden vessel, and hidden in the ark beneath the mercy-seat, within the vail.

Wondrous transition! Yet only faintly does it foreshadow the resurrection and exaltation of the Son of God.

Yet a little while and the blood-washed company of victors, through grace, shall see the bread wherewith they had been sustained in the wilderness, they shall enter within the vail, and with wonder and joy ineffable eat of the hidden manna.

Sad is the record of Israel's backsliding. Unbelieving hearts despised the pleasant land and also the heavenly bread.

This is first recorded in Num. xi, where it would appear that the mixed multitude who accompanied Israel out of Egypt, probably adventurers of many nations, who had never known what it was to be under shelter of the "blood of sprinkling" fell a-lusting after the food to which they had been accustomed in Egypt.

It is written that "evil communications corrupt good manners," and here it would seem that the infection of these murmurings and lustings soon told with deadly power on the children of Israel.

There are none from whom the true child of God has more to fear than those who profess to be the Lord's people, go a certain distance on the road from Egypt, and then turn back in heart and prove that they never were "born again".

The distinct and explicit instruction of Scripture concerning those who have the form of godliness but deny its power is "from such turn away." (2 Tim. iii. 5). Indeed it is the exterior of formal godliness covering the unregenerate heart that forms the special peril of the last days.

Very commonly God's instructions are reversed, and the children of God are counselled, to seek the company of such, hoping to do them good. Did Israel do good to the mixed multitude? Verily no. But the mixed multitude dragged Israel down to its own level and made them partakers of its own sins.

Israel wept again and said, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely . . . but now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." Thus Satan paints in glowing colours to the backsliding soul the world and the enjoyments that a little while before with lively faith he gladly left behind.

Infatuated by the tempter's snare they forget the burdens and the groans, the taskmaster's lash, the bricks without straw, the very furnace of affliction whence they were delivered. They lust after Egypt's dainties and despise the bread from heaven.

God gave them one food and one only. Their complaint was, there is nothing at all *beside* this manna. So God has given the believer one food for his spiritual life and one only, that is Christ. Oh, the danger of losing relish for and satisfaction in Christ! The soul is then in slippery places. Once Christ was enough. All things were let go that Christ might be embraced. But now something is wanted *beside* Him. Some long surrendered vanity is desired, some old besetting sin is tampered with, the society of some ungodly companion becomes attractive, the pleasures of the world are indulged in, its associations and ways are adopted. The heart is saying if not the lips, "our soul is dried away—nothing at all beside this manna".

But further still, in Num. xxi., unbelief waxes bolder against God: "There is no bread, neither is there any water"; and now comes out the secret of the lie, "our soul loatheth this light bread".

Restoration from such a condition can only be through the chastening rod and a fresh sight of the cross of Jesus.

The fiery serpent's bite and the brazen serpent's healing tell of judgment and of mercy for the backsliders.

Such an experience is found in Ps. lxxiii. Up to verse 14 it is backsliding and murmuring. Driven to the shelter of the Sanctuary the weary one finds in that calm and holy retreat a divine unravelling of all his perplexities, a healing of all his wounds. He sees what folly he had been guilty of: "So foolish was I and ignorant, I was *as a beast* before Thee," but chastisement and restoring grace at length have done their work: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire *beside Thee*".

J. R. C.

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

By W. LINCOLN.

PART II.

DIALOGUE II. FROM CHAP. III. 6, TO V. 1.

(Continued from page 21.)

BUT whilst the companions express their amazement at such an one as she had been, at length beginning actually to obey Him, and coming out in response to His invitation, and more so still at His own presence vouchsafed to her at once when she listens to His voice, insomuch that they behold the symbols of His presence as the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and as in the Temple in Canaan, He gives vent to His delight when it is evident that His love has produced some correspondence, however feeble, in her heart. She had hesitated in Dialogue I., of this second part; but now she proves by her action, that to her His favour was everything. And evidently, as all over the Word we are taught, obedience pleases Him very much. It is strange when we know so well how to gladden His heart and how to enjoy his smile, that we are so listless and negligent oftentimes in this matter.

So in iv. 1, and following verses He speaks adverting to some particulars of her beauty. But besides these, He utters many other kind words, as if he would not

d from telling out His love. For the whole ter, with the exception of the very last is one sustained burst of admiration and a Saviour, what a way is Thine! The commended their encomiums with glancing first n and then at the evident gladness which d not only at His coronation but at His ay synchronizing therewith. Their last 11, seem to imply that they suspect that of His heart is caused more by the latter former.

wn language shows how little of the truth agined and how very much more His own ved with the bride of His choice than with hich He won. For in all these sixteen d by Him, there is not one word as to His all, all is concerning his love and delight. If the reader casts his eye down chap. I think be struck with this fact. His first peats as if He were full of admiration. u art fair, my love, behold thou art fair. een these two beholds, as if they were not ough for her to hear, He inserts the ase, "my love." One must not allow one's noticing and enjoying any one word of His, t, because His words are so full and pre. o feed oneself with each one. True the is doubtless his Jewish, or rather his ride; but we know that the things that and shall again obtain as respects the le, are patterns of the heavenly realities (Heb. ix. 23.)

His admiring gaze is fixed first upon her in i. 15, He had spoken of these, where d why these should first attract His notice. are life and likeness to Him obtained. as doves, being characterised by sincerity ness. There is not the slightest need now : our original vileness. For we have m, like Nathanael, we have followed in the n xxxii. 9. Specially we have learned ver our sins over, God will expose them ; ther hand if we expose them for Him to His grace, and by the blood of His Son, r them. Thus we have no inducements e knows all, for we have told Him ; He ng of it, for Himself has "covered" all. stead of running away from His gaze as

naturally we should do, we know Him as our hiding place and desire by His own eye to be guided. Thus according to the character of His own grace, according to the value of the blood of Christ, are we clean. If he can discern one spot, He can discern a flaw in His own work. If He cannot, as we know He cannot do this, then have we confidence before Him. Our eyes are doves' eyes.

Secondly, He conjoins most intimately salvation and obedience. For not only does He speak of the hair immediately after the eyes, but even in the very first clause He had woven these two somewhat together. For His word there is, "thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks". So in Rom. x. 10, faith and confession are placed close together, and in Mark xvi. 16, believing and being baptized are conjoined. I do not mean to imply that baptism is confession of Him. I only assert that Scripture does sometimes connect faith and the first fruits of obedience, consequent on faith. This is a point which at the present day we should never lose sight of. The Scriptural direction 'believe,' 'believe' is being now so pressed by some, as if the fact were much lost sight of, that there is an inert, inoperative faith, which is not of the least value before God. "The devils believe and tremble." It is not so generally noticed as it ought to be, that properly John iii. commences with the last three verses of John ii. They constitute a divine preface and reveal the counter truth to the precious statement of John iii. 14 and 16. Through our translators beginning the chapter where they have done, they were led to omit a whole word from the first verse. The entire passage ought to read like this, "Many believed in His name. But Jesus did not intrust himself to them". For He knew what they were "BUT there was a man," a real case, notwithstanding the hypocrisy of many others. So in chapter xii., many of the rulers believed in Him, but they did not confess Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the praise of men more than (and not) the praise of God". Simon Magus believed and yet continued in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. This sort of converts is produced largely and easily. It serves to bring the preachers into notoriety, and if the work be advertised as it is almost sure to be, to bring them their due reward at once. But the souls themselves are unbenefitted: they endure for a while, but having *no root*, in time of temptation fall away and generally become bitterly

hostile to the truth of God. Therefore let preachers and hearers each notice that the word of commendation as to the hair follows immediately after the gracious word as to the eye. The hair resembling the flock of goats on the top of Mount Gilead imports Nazarite consecration and perfect subjection of the bride to the Lord. See this enlarged upon in 1 Cor. xi. As the long hair of the woman is the symbol of subjection to the man, so the covered head of females in the assembly is the token of that assembly's recognition of Jesus being her sole and absolute Lord and Master. And then when the individuals of that assembly go forth into the world, they are ever to bear in mind who is their one and only Sovereign Lord.

The Lord continues: "thy teeth are like a flock shorn, which come up from the washing, whereof *every one* beareth twins and none is barren among them." Hear we hear two words of praise, instead of one, so pleased is He to praise whenever and for as much as ever He can. "White as wool," is a well known Scripture figure. But the other and chief commendation is most noteworthy and in admirable connexion with what he had just said as to dutiful and loving subjection to Him. For there is no commoner way in which a carnal christian betrays his self-will, than by his one sided views of truth, or by his partial and uneven obedience. But here conversely the Lord, in his praise of the teeth, specifies not only as to their whiteness but to their evenness and to the upper and under teeth perfectly corresponding from one side of the mouth unto the other. "Every one bears twins." In the case of a tooth deficient in any part of the mouth, the food is not equally pressed and bitten. Likewise is this the case with many, who will select some side of truth, as if it were all that Scripture said upon the subject. Such may imagine that this mode is healthy and profitable. The spiritual christian, who sees further and who has a heart to enjoy every word of God, is aware how much is lost by the contrary practice. The same holds good in our obedience. It must be full and entire and fair all round. If one lust be allowed in the heart, if one sin be unchecked in the life, we may be like the Amaziahs of old, serving the Lord but then it is not "with a perfect heart" and the obedience is not accepted. Abraham's obedience as in Gen. xxii. in the Old Testament and Christ's in the New, as in Phil. ii., are specimens of what utter truth in the inward parts, of what whole-heartedness He requires.

And yet with all this subjection and whole-hearted obedience, nothing is more precious to the soul than the blood of Christ. And "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Hence we read: "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet and thy speech is comely." When we draw nigh to God, that blood is our plea; when we think of the light in which He dwells and yet we are encouraged to come so very near, our assurance, our confidence is sustained by the blood. Nowhere, as we well know, is the immense value of that blood seen, as it is under His own eye and in His own light. Whence it comes to pass that the further in we go, actually the bolder we become. 'Tis of this we speak to ourselves, when conscience otherwise might terrify us. 'Tis to this we point, when we tell the sinner that we have been washed and sanctified ourselves. And the fountain in which we were washed is as pure now and as cleansing now for others as it was for us. Oh! the blood of Jesus. The precious blood of Jesus. Surely it is apt that the lips be scarlet, or else they would belie the word oftenest heard to escape therefrom. For the two lips together produce one single sound. As at the first we were redeemed by it, Eph. i. 7; justified by it, Rom. v. 9; washed from our sins in it, Rev. i. 7; brought nigh to God by it, Eph. ii. 7; and set apart thereby for Him, Heb. xiii; and ourselves having peace-perfect from it; so at the last, even in heaven itself, when having been welcomed home by God on Christ's presentation of us there, and having been next before Christ's judgment-seat, and Satan though present* utterly foiled there; then shall we be encouraged and urged on by Christ as Michael to cast Satan who accused us and all his angels finally from heaven, and then too our battle-cry shall be "Victory through the blood of the Lamb," Rev. xii. 11. But what a different life this is to that which was ours by nature, when as lepers we had to put a covering thereon and to cry unclean, unclean (Levit. xiii. 45.) What a change!

How different too is this boldness and confidence from that daring impiety or slavish dread which erst we exhibited when we knew nothing of our natural state and nothing of the holiness of God. True He testifies: "Thy neck is like the tower of David," so erect and stately is its appearance; for grace can render us bolder than we should be even if we had never sinned at all, as far as purity and holiness trans-

* See proof of this in my Lectures on Revelation Chap. xii.

innocence; true likewise that saved and conscious Whose we are and Whom we serve, we have been and all of us in battles many, wherein we have won victories over ourselves, over Satan and the world, insomuch that that "neck" resembles an array whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all of mighty men;" but it is true too that He discerns another trait therewith also to admire: temples are like a piece* of a pomegranate thy locks." Thus ere He adverts to the singularity in our boldness, He discerns the humility, destiny marked upon our brow of which the grey white and red there are the evidences. It is a wonderful thing to conceive that presently, soon, we shall actually stand before our God the omniscient Saviour. Oh! then as Christ endued with beholding the travail of His soul; as He presents us to Himself with exceeding joy, we are overpowered as we recal to mind all His love way from first to last, and how slow we had to believe and to reciprocate that love. Oh! relief even now it is to think that the next after that overpowering one, will witness us feet adoring. At such a time, when our brow this expressive Scripture puts it, mantled white it would surely be impossible for us who once far off, who yet have been brought so high, and loved so dearly and treated so tenderly, it would be able for us to remain standing. We will cast ourselves at His feet and sing worthy is the Lamb." Here we find, as throughout Scripture, that whilst alone is our ground and our foundation built; still the struggles, the reality of the contest, whilst down in the world we were engaged, nevertheless we have displayed, the intelligence to discern between good and evil, the apprehension to discern between what was really of God and what was carnal, all will come up then. If it is written, quoted from Rev. xii. 11: "They overcome him by the blood of the Lamb," yet is it added, "and by the testimony of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto death". So here: whilst we read of the scarlet and of the temples blushing, yet do we see the trophies of many and many a combat although we may have been engaged in in times past, have yet to a certain extent faded from our minds, insomuch that we forget the pain and anguish which then they caused us, but here and is remembered by Him, and here the shield of the valiant, the shield of faith, is seen. 'Tis "hung up" now here in this song. For the time of faith and of warfare is over; but the time of praise and of reward has come. Instead of a shield, we shall have a crown, its hue and glory diverse, according to the valour which for Him we have displayed.

Then lastly He has a kindly word of her two breasts, or as Paul expresses the like thought,—the breast-plate of faith and love. These breasts the Lord compares to "two young doves that are twins which feed among the lilies." For we must never forget that faith and love do grow conjointly. If we do truly believe in Him, how can we not love Him? If we take into our souls the truth of the uncreated Son of God hanging on the cross to save us from hell, how will not our whole being be swayed by the consciousness thereof. If we grasp that even now in yonder glory He remembers us, is engaged constantly in our behalf, and soon is Himself coming expressly to fetch us and to have us with Him for ever, how shall not our hearts' affections be set upon Him. And these doves feed among the lilies. Oh! the consciousness of what we should have been and where we should have been, but for divine grace! Thus delight in, and admiration of God, joy in the Lord, co-exist with wonderment at the mighty, radical, infinite change wrought in us. Who will then praise Him most but he who sees what a wretch he would have been but for God, and who sees what a God it is Who has loved and saved him and brought him home to glory and to Himself! Blessed be God, we have Eternity, Eternity to praise Him in!

THE LEVITES.

AN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIAN WORKERS IN ST. JAMES' HALL, GLASGOW.

BY JOHN RITCHIE.

I DESIRE to speak to young Christians to-night, who, having been recently converted, now desire "the sincere milk of the Word." (1 Pet. ii. 2.) In every step of your homeward journey, you need a "Thus saith the Lord" from the Book of God, ere you can move forward in your *walk* as His child; and equally so in your *work* for Him. Only thus can you ensure His *smile* now, and His "Well done" at the judgment seat of Christ.

We have looked at the congregation of Israel in the wilderness, between Egypt and Canaan, as typical of the Church of God on earth, redeemed and sheltered by the Blood of the Lamb—delivered from the bondage and power of Satan, the prince of this world, even as they from Pharaoh's lash and Egypt's brick kilns—separated from the world by the cross and grave of Jesus, as Israel was separated from Egypt by the waters of the Red Sea.

A peculiar treasure to God—strangers and pilgrims dwelling in tents, and passing through a wide trackless desert, that yielded them nothing, they were *dependent* on God for everything—fed by His manna, drinking of His water, guided by His cloud, they passed onward to the inheritance secured and promised to them beyond.

Jehovah Himself dwelt in His Tabernacle, in the midst of His redeemed; His cloud abode above them, and, like a father resting in the bosom of His family, they, as children, were gathered around Him, encircling His dwelling place.

In the camp of the Redeemed, and gathered around Jehovah, were *three* classes of persons, viz., Priests, Levites, People—twelve tribes of people, one tribe of Levites, and one family of Priests. The Priests *worshipped*, the Levites *served*, the people *followed*, and each of these represents the believer in one of His relationships to God. Every believer is at *once* a Priest, a Levite, and one of the people of God. As a priest he is a *worshipper*, as we read—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and hath made us kings and *priests* to God" (Rev. i. 6, 7); and again, "Ye are a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 9.) This honour have *all* His saints, and not a select few as Aaron and his sons in Israel, for every believer in Christ has been cleansed with the same precious blood, and anointed with the same Holy Unction, and *this* is what constitutes a priest, and qualifies for the worship of God. Differences of rank, age, attainment, or experience, come not in here, *all* the saved are on a level as worshippers. The young convert of last night, and the father in Christ, are equally *welcome* and equally *capable* of offering praise to God. They are linked in life with the Great High Priest above, who is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. ii. 11), but in the midst of the great congregation conducts "divine service" in

the sanctuary above (Heb. viii. 1, 2), whither they have access through the rent vail to worship God by Him. The Father seeketh *such* to worship Him. The mockery of unconverted sinners attempting to worship Him, He seeketh not. Such worship, however intellectual or refined it may be in man's estimation, is only an abomination to God (Isa. i. 11-15), the worship of Cain over again.

The believer is also one of the "people of God" (1 Pet. ii. 10), one of the "peculiar people" (Titus ii. 14), who have been delivered from the power of darkness (1 Pet. ii. 9) and from this present evil world (Gal. i. 4), and now as strangers and pilgrims (1 Pet. ii. 11) are being guided through this wilderness-world by a Father's eye (Ps. xxxii. 8), on to the rest beyond, to a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. (Heb. xi. 10.)

The Levites served. Their work was to bear the Tabernacle through the desert, to set it up when they rested, and to take it down when the cloud moved for the journeying of the camp. They thus form a beautiful type of the believer as the girded servant of Jesus Christ, bearing about the Lord Jesus in all the glories of His Person, of Whom the tabernacle in each of its parts was a figure.

To *this* subject, viz., service or ministry, I wish now to turn, and to a child of God it ought to be one of deepest interest. As God *alone* can call His *sons*, so He must call and qualify His *servants*, and having done so, He has in His Word shewn them the servants' place, path, and portion, and although times and surroundings have changed, God and His Word abide for ever, and constitute our *only appeal* in this, as in all else connected with our lives as His people below.

May the Lord give us subject hearts, and understandings on this most important subject of *service*, we need it, especially on a day like ours when God's call and God's order are so much set aside in the matter of Ministry and man's colleges, ordinations, and orders have assumed their place. The results are apparent everywhere around us.

There are three things we do well to look at severally in connection with the Levites as Jehovah's Servants, viz. :—

1st. The Servants.

2nd. The Service.

3rd. The Appointed Way.

The workers—the work—and how the work was to

one. All was arranged by God Himself. Man's ideas, or reasonings, had no place in the ordering of the Service connected with the House of God, *but have they yet.*

THE SERVANTS.

And the Lord spake unto Moses saying—Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them before Aaron the priest that they may *minister* unto him. And they shall keep his charge and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to be the service of the tabernacle" (Num. iii. 6, 7), and also—"Thou shalt take the Levites for Me, (I am the Lord) instead of all the first-born of the children of Israel . . . and the Levites shall be *Mine*," (Num. i. 1, 45.) Thus the Levites were called by the Lord for His holy work, and it requires the call of God still to make a Servant of Jesus Christ. Nothing else can do. Paul says—"it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and *called* me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him" (1 Cor. i. 15, 16.) "Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God." (Col. i. 1.) God's *call* and God's *credentials* of His apostleship. Of the service of a church he knew nothing, he was God's servant, and he served, "not to please men, but God, who trieth the heart". (1 Thess. 2, 4.)

The Levites were chosen by God for His service and He fitted them for the doing of it. But why did God choose Levi for His service? Was there any superiority found in them above their brethren? The only active thing we read of concerning their father is his extreme wickedness. Turn to Gen. xlix. 5, where we get Levi's character, dark as sin can be—it—"Simeon and Levi are brethren, instruments of *deceit* are in their habitations. O my soul, come thou into their secret, unto their assembly be not united; for in their *anger* they slew a man, and by their *self-will* they digged down a wall. Cursed be their *anger* for it was *fierce* and their wrath for it was *severe*."

I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." Such was Levi's natural character—cruel, evil, angry, fierce, cursed, and scattered; of all his sons he had the least to boast of, and yet the light of God shines the brighter on so dark a background, and Levi is chosen for the service of the Lord. He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise that no flesh may glory in His strength. Mere nature, however fair or cultured, can

have no place in the service of God, and as each fair form passes before man's eye with admiration the voice of the Lord may be heard saying—"Neither hath the Lord chosen this" (1 Sam. xvi. 9,) as in the case of Jesse's seven sons—the stripling boy in the sheepfold is the one of God's choice to guide and rule his people, and lay the proud Goliath low. One of God's most honoured servants was a blasphemer and persecutor, even Saul of Tarsus, yet the grace of God was "exceeding abundant" and the "chief of sinners" became the "chosen vessel" to bear the Name of Jesus "before Gentiles kings, and the children of Israel," (Acts ix. 15,) and to declare the wondrous mystery of Christ, and the Church kept secret since the world began. Swearing Bunyan, and others in our own day brought from the convict-cell, the coal-pit, and the plough, to sound abroad the name of Jesus, witness the wisdom and grace of God still, in the choice of those He calls to serve Him. Angels He uses not in this blessed work, but *man* the most debased and sunk of all His creatures, him He takes up and uses as the vessel to display the "riches of His Grace" now, and to bear the "eternal weight of glory" by-and-by, when earthly labour is past. O! beloved, may we walk worthy of such a call, and throw aside everything as perishable dross that would impede or trammel us in the service of such a Master. But it is written, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isa. lii. 11,) and "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord for ever," (Ps. xciii. 5,) so the Levites must be *fitted* and in *condition* to enter upon such a work. Thus, before any of us dare enter on a path of service for the Lord, there must first be the preparation for it which is of the Lord. Let us see what the Levites needed, and thus we may gather what is necessary in order still acceptably to serve the Lord.

Turn to Num. viii., where we get the Levites prepared for service—and first

"Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them to cleanse them; sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean." v. 6, 7.

Cleansing was the *first* thing. Man would have said—"Educate them". God says—"Cleanse them," and cleansing is still the first thing. "Ye must be born again" has to be sounded in the ears of a "master in

Israel" ere he can understand "heavenly things," and before any one can serve God as He desires, the first essential thing is *Conversion*, the "washing of Regeneration," the New Birth—born of water and the Spirit. Sprinkling water on the Levites shews the action of the word of God on the conscience of the sinner on the day of his conversion. He is made "clean every whit" through the word spoken unto him. (John xv. 3.) His sins are washed away, and by the incorruptible seed of the word of God he is born again, (1 Pet. i. 21,) and a nature implanted, a life communicated, in which he can live for, enjoy, and serve God. Man may preach, teach, or sit in a professor's chair, but until he is "born again," he is unfit for the service of God; he must be made a *son* first, then a servant, and God's servants are all His sons by birth, not by education or attainment, and without this he would assuredly be a servant of the devil.

Have you here to-night who go out and seek to serve God, been *all* "born again"? You have no right to give a tract, or teach a class in the Sunday School until you are, and even if you do so it wont keep you out of hell at the end. Balaam and Judas preached and prophesied true things, but where are they to-night? It's only a few months since a brother in Christ from Ireland told us he had preached five years before he was "born again," aye even after he was "licensed," "called," and "ordained," to the work. I fear he is not a solitary case, may God open blinded men's eyes ere it be too late, and *leaders* and *led* be found fallen in the ditch together.

After the sprinkling of water on them we read, "let them shave their flesh and wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean".

First they were sprinkled by another, then cleansed by themselves. The "new born babe" is told to "*lay aside* all malice, guile, hypocrisies, and evil speaking, (1 Pet. ii. 1,) and to put off the old man with his deeds and lusts. (Col. iii. 8, 9.) These things he cannot take into the service of God with him. Think of God's servant getting "soon angry" when he is told to be "patient". (2 Tim. ii. 21.) Like the Levites' hair, these fruits of the old man must be shaven off with the sharp razor of God's truth. The Levites' clothes too were to be washed. They denote character, and God's servant must be able to face both church and world unblameable in character; especially must he have a good report with those that are without. It is

melancholy to hear it said, "Mr. So-and-so is a gifted teacher, or evangelist, but his conduct is so unlike his preaching it has no power over us"! Beloved, such things ought not to be, every one serving God in the smallest way ought to be able to do so at their own door, in their own workshop where they are best known, first, and if their "filthy clothes," or bad character wont allow them to do it there, better stop it altogether. God is Holy—His service is holy—and our lives as His servants as well as our character ought to be "unblameable in holiness," (1 Thess. iii. 15,) having a good conscience toward God and man. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, *let us cleanse ourselves* from all filthiness of the *flesh* and *spirit* perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

Then follows the offering for their acceptance in v. 8-13. We are accepted in the Beloved, (Eph. i. 6,) and His one offering for us has made us meet for service *now*, and glory *then*. Next comes separation—"Separate the Levites from among the children of Israel and the Levites shall be mine, and after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the Tabernacle," v. 14, 15. The servant of God must be like his Master, "separate from sinners," as it is written—"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," (2 Cor. vi. 14,) no association of the servant of God with the world or the servants of Satan. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Lot tried it in Sodom, but he utterly failed, and others have tried it since, with the same result. The Lord's servant must be wholly His, untrammelled to do His work at His bidding, and should the world offer its assistance, either in patronage, money, or any other way, he must be able to say as one of old, "Ye have nothing to do with us, to build an house unto God—we ourselves together will build," (Ezra iv. 3,) and "Ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem". (Neh. ii. 20.) If this were acted upon now-a-days (and God means it should) it would considerably lessen the number of those professedly engaged in God's work we fear, and, thank God, where it has been obeyed it has yielded its fruit.

GIVEN TO AARON.

I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron. No more their own, but in place of Israel's first-born, and typically dead and risen men, they were given to God's High Priest. Ye are not your own. "Ye are bought with a price: be not ye the servants of men." (1 Cor.

Our blessed Lord and Master, in that priestly John xvii., prays for the men given to Him in the world. O beloved, may we prove true to His only call. His *seal* and *name* are on us, and His priestly rod is blooming in the presence of Aaron's bloomed and yielded fruit for the tribe who were joined unto him. The rod was (Num. xvii.), but the fruit was counted to Him. Even so, in the Risen One our fruit is found. In Him we bear fruit in our service to God's Father, yet as the branch, not the trunk, bears the fruit. To it the fruit is counted although the trunk bears the sap, so we, by drawing from Him, who is the source of life and power, yield the "fruits of righteousness" by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God (Phil. i. 11.)

Unto Aaron, they served *before* him, each in his own place *waiting* on his service. (Numb. viii. Deut. xviii. 2.) How much more glorious is our service, beloved fellow-servant. United to our High Priest, within the veil, joined to the Lord, in His spirit with Him. (1 Cor. vi. 17.) Our holy life is to live in Communion with His heart, His hands are busied with His service here, His feet before Him and listening to His voice as He speaks, and in the intelligence of those who are His children, and to whom He commits His secrets, for He saith, "Henceforth I call you not servants but friends", (John x.) going forth to do His will, seeking only His face and His smile, as one sweetly sings,

"I've now to please but one,"

"My Saviour, Master, Lord, and Friend."

His inheritance or lot in Canaan was given unto the Lord as their inheritance, and they were to eat of His inheritance, the offerings of the altar (Deut. xviii. 1, 2). An earthly inheritance would naturally have diverted their attention from one great object of their lives, so the Lord said, "I will be none; nevertheless all their needs were to be supplied

by Him, and through the gifts of their Father." (Deut. xviii. 6-8.) The blessed Lord when He came down, went about His Father's business, con- doing good to all around Him, yet no earthly inheritance, His, the lonely mountain side, or the pilgrim road ordered by loving hearts at Bethany were His inheritance. Yet could He rejoice and say, "*The Lord is the inheritance of mine inheritance* and of my cup, thou shalt not leave me empty. The lines have fallen to me in

pleasant places, yea I have a *goodly heritage*". (Ps. xvi. 5, 6.) And time was, when His servants followed His steps, and one Apostle was not ashamed to say, "Silver and gold have I none" (Acts iii. 6), while another tells us he suffered the loss of all things for Christ, and proved by hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness, bonds, and imprisonment, for His sake and the Gospel's, it was a *reality*. Men in these days served not for filthy lucre's sake, or the praise of men, but the love of Christ constrained them, and their reward awaits them in that day of coming glory. Oh! dear brother and sister in Christ, look around to-day, and see how the fine gold is dimmed, and the service of the Lord become little else than a comfortable way of making an easy living. Salaries, stipends, pew rents, and church collections have in many cases more attention than the salvation of souls from an everlasting Hell. *False* servants join like the *Levite* from Bethlehemjudah, who came to Micah in search of a place, bargained with him to become his priest, received a salary of two shekels of silver yearly, with a suit of apparel and his "victuals," and with that was "content" to remain and do the religion of the family. And probably he would have remained, had not a "larger sphere of usefulness presented itself to him, and an offer was given him to become priest to a tribe, which was declared to be "better," and doubtless yielded more "hire," and accordingly was accepted (Judges xvii. 26). So he left his former "diocese" as sheep without a shepherd. This needs no comment, it is the practice in the religious world around us. May every true servant of Jesus wash his hands of the godless trade, and be content to be as His Master, who was known among men as the carpenter of Nazareth, or His Apostle Paul who laboured with his hands making tents when the work of the Lord so demanded, and with his lips preached and taught Jesus Christ.

Such are some of the characteristics of those who served God of old, and such still are needed in the Church below. Let us thank God for as many such as we see, and pray the Lord of the harvest to send many more such labourers into his own harvest, men who are neither sloths, nor money lovers, but who, with their eyes on the judgment-seat, will serve, seeking not the smile, nor fearing the frown of men, but studying to be approved unto Him who hath said, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me to give every man according as His work shall be. (Rev. xxii. 12).

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

JACOB A-DYING.
GENESIS XLVIII.

IT is interesting to mark the comment of the Holy Ghost Himself on the history which He Himself has penned. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." As the Holy Ghost knew what particulars were to be recorded in the lives of those of old, so He can best fix our souls on the special points of instruction which their histories are designed to afford. In the enumeration of the saints of old, borne witness to for their faith, we find our attention called to circumstances which we might hardly have noticed. The notice in Heb. xi. of the eventful life of Jacob, refers to this chapter of Genesis—"By faith, Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff." We see here that the Holy Ghost fastens on those instances in the lives of the saints of old, which especially evinced faith. He characterises faith as being precious. "By faith, Jacob," &c.

There is great force in that word, "rich in faith." (Jas. ii. 5.) The soul which knows the God with whom it has to do, is very "rich." It has pleased God to reveal Himself in all the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus, and these riches can alone be appreciated and possessed by faith. The Holy Ghost reveals them to those whom he has quickened to believe in Jesus. These are the riches which faith can call its own; they are inalienable. On this ground, we find the Apostle Paul taking the high standing of one who was able to confer more than he had received, at the very moment he is thanking the Philippians for their liberality towards him. "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." (Phil. iv. 19.) The Apostle had been well trained in that school which makes its scholars "rich in faith." He had, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, stripped himself of everything which might have been reckoned either a natural or an acquired advantage. (Phil. iii. 7-8.) But he had learned the difficult lesson, "In whatsoever state I am, to be content." The Philippians had lovingly supplied his want; but he, in his eager pursuit of winning Christ, was "rich in faith." He knew what riches he had in Christ, and what riches were still to be had in Him, and therefore could confidently return the Philippians a far greater

blessing than that which he had received from them. "My God," says he (that is, he reckons upon having God for his God—for his portion—and therefore he can say "My God"), "shall supply all your need."

Surely this same ground is open to ourselves to take; but we have made little progress in that school wherein the Apostle was so great a proficient. In order to become "rich in faith," many of us have to be beaten out of confidence in our advantages, as Jacob was, rather than to learn their worthlessness by faith, as Paul did. It was when Jacob fled from his brother Esau—(Gen. xxvii.), when his "staff" was his only portion—his all (as he says to the Lord, chap. xxxiii. 10, "with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands")—it was when "the stones of the place" were his pillow, that Jacob had his most wondrous vision—"the ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it." Then it was that the Lord stood above it, and revealed Himself to Jacob, as the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and he engaged also to be his God. Jacob had his "staff" as a wanderer, but Jacob had the God of Abraham and Isaac for his God. And how rich he was, had he only known it. He was never richer all his life through than at that moment. He started, then, not to seek his fortune, but with his fortune already made. He had God for his portion. And if Jacob is to take the higher place of the bleaser ("without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better") it must be by learning the riches he was in possession of, when he had only his "staff" in his hand, and the stones of Luz for pillows; he must learn to be "rich in faith," in having the Lord for his God.

It is not hard, beloved, for us to realise that, as poor ruined sinners in ourselves, the moment we are by the grace of God brought to receive Christ, we are rich indeed—and not only rich, but like Jacob with his "staff", poor, yet making many rich? It is hard to realise that our fortune is already made. We start on our Christian career as blessed of God, and as having Him for our exceeding great reward, as well as for our shield. And we become "rich in faith" when we experimentally know this, and can attach more value to the blessing of a poor saint than the gift of a great man.

Here, in this chapter of Genises, we have Jacob presented to us after all his many wanderings from place

to place. He had proved the God with whom he had to do. How manifestly had God shewn His faithfulness to Jacob in all the engagements He had made to him, when on leaving his father's house, he was a houseless, homeless pilgrim at Luz. God had graciously provided for him, in giving him "meat to eat, and raiment to put on". We find him here (not in Canaan, but in Egypt) on his death-bed, and, as we are told, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "leaning on the top of his staff". Behold everything in keeping with the dying pilgrim. He is a stranger in a strange place.

He has his "staff" to lean on, but he has God for his portion. Surely Jacob now realised that he had been substantially blessed at Luz, that he was really enriched then; and never, at any period of his life, was he so fully enriched as when he had only his "staff" in his hand, and heaven opened over him to bless him. He had been well stripped of all his confidence by the way; and now is about to close his career with no more than that with which he had set out, his "staff" in his hand. Doubtless, his "staff" had been with him in all his wanderings—it now brought the early scene of Luz vividly to his recollection. And when weighed down with weakness, in the full confession of his pilgrim character, he takes the high place of the bleaser. He can now with far greater confidence, bless both the sons of Joseph, than he could have done when possessed of temporal riches.

"By faith, he blessed both the sons of Joseph."

"He had an insight into the Divine counsels, and learnt the Divine order. Without anything but his "staff" in the attitude of a worshipper, he could say, with an intensity of meaning, "I know in whom I have believed." He had learnt the God with whom he had to do. "God, before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." (v. 15 16.) It was by faith that Jacob blessed both the sons of Joseph. The retrospect of faith leads the soul to rest on the proved faithfulness of God, and to reckon on all the fullness of God. And "God is faithful"; that is enough. "He is faithful that promised." Such is the portion of faith. "Leaning on the top of the staff;" destitute of outward means; but able to speak very confidently because faith leads to God, and brings to God. "My God shall supply all your need," says the Apostle—

"the God who fed me all my life" says the Patriarch, "bless the lads".

And if we, beloved in the Lord, were on our death-bed, what should we find? We, in God's mercy, may have proved as Jacob did, our own riches; but we shall not find ourselves a bit richer than when first we started on our pilgrim course. We were then only sinners saved by grace—but what riches are ours as such? The highest riches, even "riches of glory"—as it is written, "that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore-prepared unto glory." (Rom. ix. 23.) We have much, very much, to learn by the way, deeply humbling to ourselves, yet redounding to the praise of the glory of His grace. But that which a Christian dies with is not the experience gathered by the way, but the faith which led him at the first, as a ruined sinner, to the Cross of Christ. The first truth is the last truth. The grace of God, as revealed in the Cross of His Son, is the truth to live by and to die with. Jacob was a dying. He says boldly—"Behold! I die, but God shall be with you." He speaks of death, "leaning on the top of his staff" as if still pursuing his pilgrim career, and about to remove from one place to another. He desired only to take possession of the land of Canaan by death, as Abraham and Isaac had done (chap. xlvii. 29-31.) This is all, God does not die, God is the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. He is still in covenant with them. He has never dissolved His relationship with them, but is unchangeable towards them in it. Jacob had faith in God. Death would not dissolve his relationship to God, even "the God of Bethel". He, as his fathers, "died in faith, not having received the promises" (Heb. xi. 13), but having so "embraced them," that he could reckon on God making all good in resurrection. Yes, "He is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him". Here was the confidence of Jacob. Here were the riches of Jacob. Here the expectation of Jacob. It was what God was to him, even the living God,— "Behold, I die, but God shall be with you."

Happy pilgrim! The "staff" on which he leaned led his soul back to Luz—and what was Jacob at Luz? nothing but a houseless, homeless, destitute wanderer; but to him, in these circumstances, Luz is changed into Bethel—the house of God. There God found Jacob, and God blessed him as a pilgrim having nothing but his "staff." And as Jacob received the blessing, so

now he gives it to both the sons of Joseph. Jacob had no claim on God for a blessing. He was a fugitive from his elder brother Esau, to whom by natural right the blessing belonged. But God allows of no right. He acts according to the counsels of His own will. He can challenge the assertion of man's rights, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord, yet I loved Jacob" (Mal. i. 2.) And now Jacob, blessing in the name God by faith, has such intelligence in the mind and ways of God as to bless both the sons of Joseph, and, in doing so, again to traverse the order of nature. He could look at his grandchildren, and see the blessing of God coming on them as freely from the grace of God as it had come on himself. Surely the thoughts of Jacob were fully occupied with God. His own life would have afforded him but a sorry retrospect. He had tried to get the blessing in his own way, but it had only led him into trouble; and he had learned, by bitter experience, that the ways of God were both higher and better than his own. How faithful had God been to his "worm Jacob". And what must be the thoughts of every dying saint? Surely not of themselves, but thoughts of God, of original grace taking them up when dead in trespasses and sins and making them sons and heirs of God. Such are the thoughts of the soul if it be in a healthy tone at such a season. It will pass in solemn review all its failures. This will indeed humble; but it will, at the same time, lead the soul to see all these blotted out by the God with whom we have to do. "Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see" (v. 10), never it may be, since he had received the name, by having the hollow of his thigh put out of joint (chap. xxxii), did he so fully realise that he had power with God and man as on his dying bed. He had now "no confidence in the flesh". Dim as to his natural eye, but clear sighted by faith, he guided his hands "wittingly". Jacob had exercised his own natural shrewdness in many ways in his past life; but now, in the fading away of his natural powers, faith is very keen in the discernment of the ways of God. "And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the first-born; and he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my lifelong unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads"

(v. 14-16). Joseph, the interpreter of God's ways to Pharaoh, could not, in this instance, see as clearly as Jacob (v. 17-18).

It needs an exercised soul, as well as a spiritual gift, to see clearly the way of grace. Pre-eminent, indeed, does Joseph stand, both as to gift and moral worth, above his father Jacob. But Jacob had been well sifted, and had learnt, experimentally, his need of grace. Parental fondness, the right of primogeniture, &c., may occupy the mind, where there is distinct gift, and that from God; but the soul well exercised in grace knows that one great truth, "No flesh shall glory in his presence". Faith in Jacob could see clearly into God's ways. Jacob had learnt it must be all of grace. "I know it, my son, I know it" (v. 19). He knew it was not the elder, and he did it "wittingly".

And where have we often found the wisest counsels? In the highly gifted teacher, or in the less gifted, yet experienced, saint? Where have we found real spiritual discernment? Has it not been among the simple-minded believers who have been learning their need of Christ in their own souls? How "wittingly" have we found the hands guided, where there has been faith in God, in the very case where even the possessor of a real gift might mislead us. Joseph thought his father was making a great mistake; and we often, when walking by sight and not by faith, do the same, calculating upon some human claim or other, whereas God has ever shown that "His ways are not our ways". "The elder shall serve the younger." Jacob was sent forth in life to learn this lesson, and, having learnt it experimentally, at the close he is able to guide his hands "wittingly".

Have we yet learnt this lesson, the entire setting aside of the flesh and the all-sufficiency of God? Were we to live and learn for a hundred years, it could only be to get this lesson by heart. Jacob's history is written for our admonition; but we ought to learn the lesson more quickly, and more deeply too, because we know the risen One and our union with Him. Our very axiom is—"the flesh profiteth nothing".

What a blessed testimony does Jacob bear to the faithfulness of God—"the God which fed me all my life long unto this day". When Jacob walked by sight, he did not so clearly see God feeding him and caring for him; but, "leaning on the top of his staff," he retraces all God's ways by faith.

If any one character could have set aside the faithfulness of God, it is that of Jacob. It was marked by

low cunning and crookedness of policy from the outset with regard to his brother Esau. But this did not at all interfere with God's fidelity to him. Looking back he sees, and I doubt not sees with joy, the failure of all his scheming and policy. Jacob is absorbed in one single thought, the grace and faithfulness of the God with whom he has to do. He was never saved from a single danger by his own policy; but Jacob can pass over all his own failures in the overwhelming thought of God's grace towards him.

And, beloved, will not our souls be able to rejoice in seeing the failure of every work of our own in which we might have confidence at the time we did it? Shall we not be glad to see all that we have done in the flesh burnt up? that that alone which was of the Spirit, and done to the glory of the Lord, might remain. And, if we are "wise after the flesh," the penalty is sure—God will take us in our craftiness. For neither by strength nor by wisdom shall man prevail.

And what a blessing the lads got from the dying pilgrim! There was great faith in Jacob to be able, in holy confidence of soul, to transfer the blessing from himself to them. He was "rich in faith" himself, and bequeathed his riches to Joseph and his sons. "Behold I die, but God shall be with you and bring you again to the land of your fathers." Even as another pilgrim, "rich in faith," said to the elders of Ephesus—"Ye shall see my face no more," but "I commend you to God," &c. (Acts xx.)

Jacob did not say, "Because I have not dwelt in the land I have not got the blessing". No! he had it by faith. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." God is always the same to faith. Faith raises us above all human thoughts and gives us to rest in God. Surely, surely it is blessed when, stripped of every confidence here, we are able to look above circumstances and trust in God Himself.

And is not this the way in which God is now leading our souls? He is not only showing us the emptiness of everything here in order to prove His all-sufficiency, by leading us to the fulness which is in Christ Jesus; but He is also showing us how prone we are to misuse the very blessings which He has given to us, by resting in them, instead of living by faith in God. The process of stripping is, indeed, painful under all circumstances, but it is peculiarly so when even

what we have is taken away from us because of our misuse of the blessing. Surely the experience of many of our souls is, that we have been entrusted with blessing and did not know how to use it aright. It has pleased God to strip us of all our ornaments that He may know what to do with us. And, having thus made room for Himself to come in, His grace has abounded again over our sins in leading us, more practically, to "live the life we now live in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God," bringing us to know the immense blessing of His presence, by the way, in reviving our faith in the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, when everything entrusted to man's responsibility has failed. "Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God. . . . which keepeth truth for ever. . . . which giveth food to the hungry. . . . The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous—the Lord preserveth the strangers—the Lord shall reign for ever and ever." (Psalm cxlvi.)

May we know more and more of "the God of Jacob"? And then, if we have to gather up ourselves on our beds, we shall be able to say, with Jacob, "Behold, I die"—"but God liveth." J. L. HARRIS.

TENDERNESS.—We may talk, says Nettleton, of the best means of doing good; but after all the greatest difficulty lies in the doing of it in a right spirit; speaking the truth in love in the meekness and gentleness of Christ. I have known anxious sinners drop the subject of religion in consequence of the preacher addressing them in an angry tone. I never was fit, says Payson, to say a word to a sinner except when I had a broken heart myself, when I was subdued and melted into tenderness, and felt as though I had just received pardon to my own soul.

PERSECUTION.—Do not fear the frown of the world. When a blind man comes against you in the street, you are not angry with him; you say he is blind, poor man, or he would not have hurt me; so may you say of the poor worldlings when they speak evil of Christians.—*M'Cheyne*.

NOTICES.

"BELIEVERS gathered to the name of the Lord, have commenced to meet in the Wellgate Hall, Wellgate, Dundee East."

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SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

IN the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, He divided the light from the darkness. That this act had a deeper significance is proved by Eph. v. 8 and 2 Cor. vi. 14, in both which the children of God are called "Light," and the unsaved are called "Darkness".

Again, in Gen. iii. 15, God says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed"—that is to say, the enmity would be continued between the two seeds throughout all generations. Put there by God as a safeguard against the more disastrous evil of their amalgamation, any attempt to disguise or modify it is Satan's work, and not God's.

In Gen. iv. this enmity is manifested in the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. It is also here shown that such enmity is compatible with the outward worship of the true God, but that under God's rebuke it issues in open apostasy, and seeks by arts and sciences to constitute for itself a congenial dwelling place WITH-OUT God upon earth.

The two seeds then seem to range themselves in two lines—the line of Cain in rebellion against God, and the line of Seth, wherein they call upon (or "call themselves by") the name of the Lord, and in which there appear notable instances of faith and piety, such as Noah and Noah.

Of these it is written that they "walked with God." A short but expressive description of lives that must have been maintained in marked separation from the world,

seeing that God says, "All flesh had corrupted His way on the earth". (Gen. vi. 12.)

But the culmination of evil which resulted in the judgment of the flood was not reached until "the sons of God" were drawn aside from the path of separation and formed alliances by marriage with "the daughters of men".

The effect of this course, so far as concerned God's testimony, was the entire abandonment of the truth, even by the Seth line, until not one witness for God was left except Noah.

And so it has ever been when the children of God form alliance of any kind with the world. The unregenerate cannot possibly rise to the level of the path of faith. The invariable result is, that one truth after another is practically compromised, and then abandoned and ignored, or else perverted to suit the carnal mind.

To maintain the path of separation to God is essential to all true witness-bearing. It brings reproach and the cross, because Satan opposes it with all his power, and devises with consummate subtlety the snares by which he may entangle the child of God, and drag him into hurtful association with the world. But Scripture bears one unvarying testimony, by many figures and many examples, both national and individual, and above all by the life and testimony of Him who alone is the Faithful Witness, that only as separation to God is maintained can witness-bearing be effectual.

After the flood, the plains of Shinar witnessed another culmination of evil in the Confederacy and Tower of Babel. This evoked anew the judgment of God, equally marked, though much less severe, viz., the

confounding of the tongues of the confederated peoples.

Out from it all, its pride and self-will and idolatry, God called Abram; as it is written, "I called him alone, and blessed him and increased him". (Is. li. 2.)

It was a call that separated him from all the world to God Himself. Every trace of association with its godless projects must be broken; one voice alone must be heard, and fashion his life and walk and regulate every step, and that the voice of God. Such is the path of faith. Having obtained one soul-satisfying view of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. iv. 6), the world is seen to be that in which God has no place. His voice is not listened to, His will is not consulted, His word is set aside. Man is exalted, and now nothing almost is restrained from them which they have imagined to do. (See Genesis xi. 6.) But faith recognises the call of God to separation from it all. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John ii. 16.) "He gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world." (Gal. i. 4.) "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." (James iv. 4.) "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." (1 John v. 19.)

The Book of Exodus opens with Israel an enslaved people in Egypt groaning under the cruel oppression of Pharaoh. Type of God's elect while yet ignorant of "the blood of sprinkling," and of Him whose power can deliver from the dominion of sin and Satan. But the night of Israel's deliverance from the stroke of divine judgment through the blood of the Lamb is also the night of their final Exodus from Egypt. The two deliverances are thus combined. So it is written in Gal. i. 4. "He gave Himself for our sins" (as the paschal lamb) "that He might deliver us from this present evil world," that is, as Israel out of Egypt. Again "Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God". (1 Pet. iii. 18), and again, "The world hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world". (John xvii. 14). Thus it is evident that the separation of God's children from the world to Himself was one grand purpose for which the Lord Jesus endured the Cross; for which also He prayed the Father, and which is still the desire of His heart.

It is interesting to trace the various ways by which

Pharaoh sought to detain Israel in Egypt, and also the steadfastness of Moses to the purpose of God that not a hoof should be left there.

First he says, "go ye; sacrifice to your God *in the land*". But the answer is in effect, if we do so, we shall sacrifice the very animals the Egyptians worship—"will they not stone us"—"we will go three days journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God *as He shall command us*". (Ex. viii. 25-27.)

Pharaoh's next proposal is, "ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, only *ye shall not go very far away*". To this Moses makes no definite answer, but warns Pharaoh not to deal deceitfully.

Pharaoh's next move is, "Go serve the Lord your God; but who are they that shall go?" And Moses said, "we will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go, for we must hold a feast unto the Lord". "*Not so,*" said Pharaoh, "go now ye that are men." (Ex. x. 8-11.)

Yet one more effort he makes (verse 24) "Go ye serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed; let your little ones also go with you". But the final answer of Moses claims *all for God*. "Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God—our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and *we know not with what we must serve Lord* until we come thither." This is truly admirable—this pertinacity with which this meekest of men maintains the right of Jehovah to every hoof they possess as well as to themselves.

But these four proposals of Pharaoh are but specimens of the schemes by which the Arch-enemy ever seeks to hinder the children of God from that separation to Him in which they alone can serve Him acceptably.

How many of the children of God are kept in unhallowed alliance with the world and its ways, by their surrounding circumstances, their natural affections and their worldly interests, let each heart answer.

Israel being delivered from Egypt and from bondage to Pharaoh, was truly a separated people unto Jehovah.

His presence also, rendered visible in the cloud by day and fire by night, marked them as a people "separated from all the people that were on the face of the earth." (Ex. xxxiii. 16.) So Balaam prophesied,

The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations". (Num. xxiii. 9.)

By circumcision and by the ordinance of the passover, by the Sabbath and the Feasts, by the Sanctuary and all its appointments, they were separated and to be maintained in permanent separation from all other nations.

Herein lay their safety and their glory. Hence, ere they were long in the wilderness, Satan plots their entanglement with the other nations.

Balaam foiled in his attempts to curse the people of God, counsels Balak the King of the Moabites no longer to oppose, but to seek friendly alliance with Israel. Satan well knew how this stratagem had succeeded in the days before the flood, and how both Adam and the Sons of God in Noah's day had yielded to the influence of woman. So again the women of Moab became the snare of Israel. The separated people are entangled with the daughters of Moab. They descend into the darkness, they accept the invitations of the ungodly—the next step is inevitably downward into deeper sin, "the people did eat and bowed down to their gods, and Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel".

These instances of failure in maintaining the separate path always followed by the judgment of the Lord, show that from the beginning it was the will of God that His people should be a holy, a separated people; as separate as light from darkness, as separate as Christ from Balaam.

Nor did this principle apply alone in Old Testament days.

In the Acts of the Apostles at the inauguration of the present dispensation how separate were the Lord's people from both Gentile and Jew. "All that believed were together." "Of the rest durst no man join himself to them." The blast of persecution scattered the seed, but wherever they were driven they bore their testimony, the light shone forth in the midst of the surrounding darkness, it refused to amalgamate either with Jewish ordinances or Gentile idolatry. Hence in all places where the Gospel was preached there was found a company of disciples, separated yet gathered together, neither Jew nor Gentile, though gathered out from both and called "the Church of God".

Perfect and glorious was the separation, at the first;

strange that so soon it should have to be written even to that separated company. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor vi. 14.)

Again, as of old, the enemy had been at work and had succeeded but too well. The ungodly had "crept in unawares,"—and the church had descended to ally itself with the world. The path of separation to God was being surrendered and hence the sharpness of the Apostolic exhortation.

The culmination of this is seen in the Book of Revelation. Instead of the Bride as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ is seen the Mystery Babylon the great the mother of Harlots, and abominations of the Earth.

J. R. C.

LABOURERS AND THEIR REWARDS.

MATTHEW XIX. 27, &c.

PETER betrayed a wrong mind, or the mind of the natural man in Matt. xix. 27—his mind was legal. The Lord allows surely the claims of service; at once He tells him that none shall ever serve Him, or make surrenders for Him, who shall not gather fruit in the glory. But having allowed this, He lets him know that men's estimate of service may be very different from God's such, I judge, is the meaning of verse 30. Then, to illustrate this and other principles connected with the state of Peter's mind, the Lord indites the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. In the course of it the man who speaks in verse 10 resembles Peter. As Peter judged that he was to reap a high reward, so does this man, but he gets no more than another who appeared to him to have earned only the tenth part of what he had been earning. But the Lord tells him that the last were first and the first last, that many were called but few chosen. The meaning of which expression again is this—that God's estimate of service and reward was not necessarily like man's, that man might put some *first* whom God would put *last*. It is not that there are not diversities of glory in the kingdom. The parable in Luke xix. shows us that there will be, but the award of them will be different from what man had judged. And so it surely will be. Many who are high in the esteem of brethren are yield-

ing less devoted service to the Lord (such service as His eye which sees in secret apprehends) than many unknown ones. But together with this we have many other principles of great moral value illustrated in this parable. The Lord of the vineyard tells the complainant that He had done him no wrong, but that He was giving him fully what he had agreed to. So let us be assured that however the Lord may please to deal either with sinners or saints, His justice will stand triumphantly vindicated. Our thoughts may be weak in this, but let us leave this with Him, only assuring ourselves that the Judge of all the earth will do right. But having thus vindicated His justice in dealing with others, showing that He had not wronged them of what was *theirs*, the Lord asks, in His turn, might He not do with *His* as He pleased, was it not lawful for Him so to do? If they stood on law as to their claims, as they judged, they must surely allow Him to stand on the same, therefore it was *lawful* for Him to do what He would with His own. This was another triumphant answer to them. Had they any right to stop His hand if He pleased to give the penny to others. Supposing even that they had not earned it—it was nevertheless *His*, and He might give it to them if He would. And so with God—He is the Lord of the well of salvation, and surely He may turn the streams and water and vivify any dead soul with them that He pleases. If He *owns* the fountain, may He not dispense the waters of life where He chooses? If He is the *sovereign* Lord of the treasures of grace, may He not bless *any* sinner? This is a great point to establish. But beyond this the Lord of the vineyard suggests to the murmurer why it was he murmured. *His eye was evil*. There the secret spring of all this complaining is detected. Man's heart is selfish and narrow; it takes no delight in grace; it is in no harmony with God's affection; it stands in law; it is envious and grudging while God is gracious and bountiful. That is the real cause of enmity against the grace of the gospel, and there is no sweeter, surer, witness that we carry in us the mind of God than our joy in the triumphs of grace, whether they be in rescuing the sinner from destruction, or in restoring the backsliding saint from his follies; in whatever of its varied ways grace shows itself, thankfully to rejoice is the sure witness that the mind of God is in us.

J. G. B.

THE REVELATION, A BOOK OF CONQUERORS.
NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY THE LATE J. G. BELLET.

THE atmosphere of this book is sometimes too weighty for the soul. We find in it something very much peculiar to itself. The Spirit of God does not here condescend to our weakness. The breath of the Spirit does not come laden with the incense of the sanctuary, but it comes to try the stability of the heart. It is only as conquerors that we can enjoy this book. We are not prepared to enter into it unless in the attitude of victory. It is the book of conquerors—of those who having partaken of the grace of the Saviour have taken part with Him. The Book of God would not be perfect without it. It is a book of Judgment, clearing the scene of all that offends and of those who do iniquity; and the business of the saints is not merely to rejoice in the grace of Christ, but to take part in the rejection of Christ. And the more deeply we enjoy the one, the more fitted we are for the other. We must be in the spirit of a conqueror to enter into it and enjoy it.

Now in the beginning of the book John himself is a conqueror. He was a "companion in tribulation," &c. That is victory in a most precious sense. There is a conqueror! What business have I to touch this book? It was revealed to a conqueror—to one willing to go into the Isle of Patmos, &c. He does not say, "Who has obtained remission of sins," &c.; no, he presents himself as a conqueror over this evil world, and O! that we may breathe this atmosphere with John.

Then he addresses his word to the Churches. How does he signalize them? Corruptions were working in each, but in each he sees conquerors—"To him that overcometh," &c. It is the conqueror that he keeps in his eye. When surveying them it is in this character he eyes them, *saints in the character of conquerors*. Do you travel on in this character? Do you see the corruptions working? Are you conquerors over them? What is conquest in the midst of the candlesticks? *Having power to resist the Jezebels of Thyatira and the Baluams of Pergamos, &c.*

In the 4th chapter what do I see? A company of "crowned elders". What is that crown? It is said, "Let no man take thy crown". In the divine mind, the crown, victory, and the kingdom are one and the same idea. It was a witness that no man had taken their crowns, so that, beloved, the one idea with which

e book opens is maintained. He sees the elders with eir crowns, having won the kingdom.

In the 5th chapter John weeps. He was told to eep not. Why? Because the "Lion of the tribe of dah had prevailed, (the same word is translated overcame,") to loose the seven seals thereof". My ul asks what business have I with such a book as is? May we pray that the God of salvation may nduct us a little more into this region. One blesses d for this book. In my mind, it is the only one at could have closed the volume. Here all is victory. Ch. 5. He took the book as a conqueror. Oh, if : had hearts to enjoy this! Oh, if we were a little ore in company with the rejection of Christ in this rld!

In the following chapters we find the Lord dealing terrible judgments on this apostate scene. (x. 1,) Now there is one little thought here about the rsonal glory of Christ. In the 4th chapter we see e Lord God on the throne, &c. Here we see the rd Jesus coming down and taking the attributes of d—that which belonged to the throne. The rain- w was about His head, the book in his hand. It is sweet passing expression of Phil. ii. He was debtor Him that sat on the throne; yet here He shews imself in His own personal glory—taking the divine tributes.

In the 12th chapter we find one very distinct view the conqueror's character. (7-11.) Here we find t only victory obtained, but victory celebrated; the nquest is so entire. Heaven is here the scene of nquerors and earth also. Conquering saints are con- plated here; not poor sinners saved by grace, &c.; it a company in the enjoyment of personal salvation victory over all the apostate principles of this world. h it is rebuking to read this book! One thought rvades it—victory in heaven, and victory on earth.

The next scene opens with the two beasts. In the 13th chapter, the whole world wondered after the east, &c. Now they have to get victory over the east on the earth. We must let the world know that e do not belong to it. How do they get victory? hey retire from the world to admire Jesus. "Great nd marvellous are Thy works," &c. (xv. 2-4.) What oes that tell me? That while the world was wonder- g after the beast, they were admiring and worshipping esus. Here is the secret of their victory—retiring om the world's idolatry into the sanctuary of worship.

Is there nothing like that abroad? Is not the world getting ready to admire the beast—practising its arts for this end? We have not yet got this great wonder but we see the world preparing for producing it. Where then is our victory? In the most sensitive retirement from all that idolatrous admiration into the sanctuary, where we can admire Jesus. *This is our proper place.* Now, this moment,* you are called to the admiration, not of the "great and marvellous" works of the Lord God Almighty, but of the world's greatness. It does not hide its character. It calls itself a "great exhibition of the world's achievements". There is nothing more simple, and no part of Scripture can help us to understand it better than this, &c.

In the 17th chapter the 10 kings give all their power to the beast. And when all political power is given to him, he wars with the Lamb; but the Lamb shall have the victory. "For He is King of Kings," &c., and they that are with Him are conquerors still.

Though not yet in collision with the beast, we are to exercise our souls in these principles.

This book contemplates these principles in exercise; and if you and I are "called, and chosen, and faithful," we are to be in company with those conquerors and companions of the Lamb—to be in living sympathy with them. In the 20th chapter it is said, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years". In the 21st, it is still the same idea. (ver. 7.) "He that overcometh," &c. Now I ask you beloved, is it not from beginning to end a book of conquerors? Upon the return of Christ we find Him in victory, and when the scene is cleared, in the new heaven and new earth, and *with Him* "he that overcometh" shall inherit all things. Little title have you and I to open the contents of such a chapter as this; but I thoroughly believe it is the only chapter that could have closed the book of God. The volume we see does not close till God's purpose is accomplished, and He has consulted for His own glory and His people's blessing. And what have you and I to do? To pray to Him in the consciousness of His love, that He might strengthen us with might by His spirit in the inner man, that we may not only enjoy the grace of our Jesus, but be true to the rejection of Jesus, who is cast out of this present evil world. I know nothing that would beautify us more than to be *boundlessly happy in the grace of the Saviour, but true, unflinchingly true to His rejection.*

* February 1851, alluding to the "Great Exhibition".

Oh what a calling! The Lord grant it may be so. And there is a connexion in these two things. "The joy of the Lord is our strength." The more happy we are in Himself the less are we debtors to the world. The more we find our good things laid up in Christ, the easier to tell the world we are independent of it. *And that is victory. The nearer to Christ, the farther from the world.* That is victory. If kept in that attitude, you may go and read the book of Revelation. And blessed be God that from beginning to end it is a book of conquerors—of those who had conflict to carry on in heaven and on earth; but "thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ".

THE OBEDIENT SON. HEBREWS XII. 7.

THE Lord Jesus came into the world, not only to save sinners, but to glorify God.

Man was created for this purpose, and in the sphere in which he failed the Lord Jesus takes up God's purpose and carries it out.

In Genesis i. 26 to 28 we have God's purpose in regard to the first man—his path was one of rule over all under the sun—he was to rule under God.

Sadly he failed, and soon it was manifest that he who was set to rule others could not rule his own spirit; thus, he who came from God upright turned quickly aside, ignored the will of God, and turned into his own way.

But the purpose of God in regard to man shall not fail, what is man's place is also the portion of the *Son of Man*: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the *Son of Man* that Thou visitest Him?" for in grace the Son of Man says, "I am a worm and no man," (Psalm viii. 4, xxii. 6), but in Psalm viii. 5 to the end, we find that *through* the little while in which the *Son of Man* was made lower than the angels, *because He died*, the original purpose of God is taken up, and *man* and the *Son of Man* are in the place of rule (see Rev. iii. 21, Rom. viii. 17, Coloss. iii. 4), sown in *weakness*, raised in *power*.

Christ in eternity was with God—His delight. His earthly path was counselled and marked out for Him: "in the volume of the Book it is written of me." He voluntarily undertook to be obedient, and in order to this in due time became man, thus humbling Himself into the creature's place to glorify God *in obedience*.

Not blindly did He come forth, but in the full knowledge of all He had to do and to suffer.

Every step of the Man of Sorrows was marked out beforehand; the heart that beat with intensest love to His only Son traced out every path His weary feet and aching heart should tread. Nay, all was written, and that not in a hurry to get the fearful details off at once, but calmly and quietly; at sundry times, and in divers manners, did the Holy Ghost indite what the Father planned as the earthly path of His beloved One.

For thirty years, ere He entered on His public ministry, the eye of the Father was on Him, knowing every step He would lead Him; and our Lord Jesus, during much of that time, was doubtless occupied in reading all the path the Father had traced out for Him, so that He bowed not His head till He said, "I thirst," and had received the vinegar, *because it was written*.

Ever abiding in the Father's love to Him, He set His face as a flint to endure all things written in Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning Him, while none of these things ever made Him lose sight of the blessed fact, that amidst all He was the object of His Father's love.

Satan, through wicked hands, might pluck off all which marked Him out as man, but He gave His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; for the object of His life was not to manifest His glory as Son of Man (Psalm viii.), but that the Father might be glorified, thus all the glory of man to Him was as grass; for a while He was content, it should wither and fade, knowing that what He gave up His Father would restore. (See Psalm xxii.; Math. xi. 27; connect 1 Cor. iii. 21 to end.)

Looking thus at the path of the Only Begotten Son, is not the question answered: "What Son is He whom the Father chasteneth not?" for if this was the manner of the Father's love to the Son, and every step from first to last traced out and planned, so is it not true in regard to the many sons He is bringing into the glory! that every step the believer will ever be led has been planned beforehand by infinite love, that he may in these steps glorify God in obedience.

The Lord Jesus needed not to be chastened into holiness, *He was holy*, and all the path of suffering the Father led Him through only proved this; and so it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, not only because it saved us, but because under the crushing of the wrath, only what delighted God, came forth from the Lord Jesus.

We are chastened that we might be partakers of His holiness, and God gets His joy, when Christ is manifested in us, as we tread in the path in which He is leaved to lead us.

The dross is purged in the furnace, that the fine gold may come forth, unto the praise and honour of Him who walketh in the midst of the burning fiery furnace, to see that our *faith* fail not.

Is it not a sweet thought that He who *now* is with us was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, and can *remember* we are dust, for He who is God over all was brought into the dust of death.

All the glory of man in Him was withered, for He who had the consciousness of being heir of all things was cut off and had nothing; but now He who thus acquiesced in the will of His Father, saying, "Not my will but thine be done," is *crowned* with glory and honour. Yes, that blessed Man, who allowed all His glory as man to be withered that God might be glorified, is glorified *thereby*. (Phil. ii. 8 to 11.)

Thus we see Jesus as a light shining in a dark place, but soon the day shall dawn, and among the many sons we shall *see* and prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God that led us in the pathway of the Son, into the light of His own presence, that to all eternity *our joy may be in God*. T. C.

THE LEVITES.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY JOHN RITCHIE.—PART II.

THE WORK OF THE LORD.

BE ye steadfast unmovable always abounding in the *work of the Lord*" (1 Cor. xv. 58), but *work* and the "*work of the Lord*" are two very different things. May every Christian worker here be taught of God to discern this difference.

We may undertake, and pursue zealously, any service nearest our hand, or that our foolish proud natural hearts may lead us into, or that another may devise and call us to. We may be busily and actively engaged in it with man's approval and admiration, but is this what Scripture calls "*The work of the Lord*"? Will this gain the Master's "*well done*" when the servant and his service, with the true hidden motives that led to it, stand unveiled before the judgment seat? Nay, verily beloved. The Lord will never own such service as *His work*, even though the servant may be His own. It is to be feared that much of the activity of Christian workers now considered *real* service for

God, will in that day of fiery trial, and weighing in the balances of God be found wanting in value, mere tinsel, the fruit of an unbroken will that never bowed before Jesus Christ as Lord, saying "*Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do*".

The work He calls *to*, qualifies *for*, and *commands* His own servant to do, is the Lord's work and nothing else. So we read—"The Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to *every man his work*". (Mark xiii. 34.) Here, beloved worker is the "*work of the Lord*". What the Master gave the servant to do, during His absence from "*His house*," and His sojourn in the "*far country*." And inasmuch as the Lord's servant pursues His divinely appointed sphere of labour seeking to please his absent Lord, he is doing the work of the Lord, and, at His return will receive his reward according to his labour. This is what we are exhorted to "*abound*" in, and what is so beautifully illustrated in the service of the Levites to which I now turn.

We have seen the tribe of Levi, chosen, called, cleansed, and given to the Lord for His Service, and now the 8,580 girded servants stand ready to engage in "*the work of the Lord*". But who is to set them to work, or how is such an army of workers to be controlled, and kept every man at his post in the midst of a waste howling wilderness? Experience they have none; examples of others who had gone before and done the same work there is no trace of; how then will it be possible to proceed? or how can they be kept from jostling one against another in their work? To man these difficulties would have been, and still are, insurmountable, and he would have turned from the scene prophesying of certain failure, democracy, confusion and strife. But it was not so, for *God had ordered all, and given to every man His work*, and under the supervision of God's High Priest (Num. iv. 27, 33), all things were done decently and in God's order, and not a jar was seen, or a note of discord heard among the 8,580 of God's workers because every man was subject to the will of God, filling the very place and doing the very work assigned to him by his Master, and allowing his fellow-worker to do the same. And this is service according to God still. The servant of the Lord having received talents from His Master and individually responsible to Him for their use, goes forth and "*trades*" with them; but when servants begin to interfere with their fellow-servant's work, and to order

them in the doing of it while they neglect their own, confusion and disorder are the sad results, and the work of the Lord hindered. All around us we see this, where man's will is at work, and where man's order has been substituted for God's order, and man's authority substituted for God's word, while many of God's true servants are grinding under committees, synods, and councils, with their laws and prohibitions, like Samson shorn and blind in the Philistines' prison house, their power and discernment gone, affording the enemies of the cross "*sport*" at their utter weakness. What will such servants answer their Lord at His appearing?

Among the Levites no such disorders were seen, because the Lord had divided the *work* into parts, and the *workers* into families. To each of the three families of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari, the Lord gave a part of His tabernacle to bear through the desert, and to pitch when they encamped. The boards, bars, pillars, pins, and sockets, were the burden of the family of Merari. (Num. iii. 35, 37.) Their's was a heavy and cumbrous burden, and, as a gift from the princes of Israel, 8 oxen and 4 waggons were given them to bear their burden—the framework of God's dwelling place through the desert. When the cloud rested for the encamping of the pilgrim host, they were the first workmen on the ground. The silver sockets were laid on the desert sand, and quickly the heavy boards of shittim wood and gold were raised up and fitted into the sockets, and the bars put through the golden rings framing the boards together into one tabernacle—the dwelling place of Israel's God. Thus their toil was ended, and their brethren and fellow-labourers the Gershonites commenced their part of the work. To the Gershonites was committed the curtains, coverings, hangings and cords, the more beautiful part of God's dwelling place, and for the bearing of these 2 waggons and 4 oxen were given them. (Num. iii. 23-26, vii. 7.) The Service of the families of Merari and Gershon was closely linked together. Merari laid the foundation and built the framework, while Gershon covered with the curtains and coverings, and strengthened with the cords, what their brethren had already builded. They walked together on the march (Num. x. 17), and halted together for their labour—while a space of three tribes intervened between them and their brethren the Kohathites who followed bearing the Holy Vessels, viz., the ark, the table, the candlestick, and altars, and for these no waggons were given, they were borne on their

shoulders along the desert in their travelling dresses of blue, purple, scarlet, and badger's skins. (Num. iii. 29-32, iv. 2-14, vii. 9.) They found a tabernacle already built by the energy of their brethren who had gone before them, and into that tabernacle they carried the golden vessels and placed them in order in the Holy and most Holy place, and the brazen vessels in the outer court as the Lord commanded Moses". (See Exodus xl. 1-32. Numbers x. 21.)

Now all this was perfectly beautiful and shews to us how, that when God's work is done in God's way, by God's servants, it is *well* done. There was the greatest diversity and yet the most perfect harmony, every worker was performing his part in the building of the house of God and not one could have been wanted. The Merarite with a "pin" and the Gershonite with a "cord" was needed as much as the Kohathite bearing the ark of the covenant, and he was pleasing and serving God in doing the work God gave him, as much as the other—for he was doing the will of God and what does it matter to a subject, obedient Levite, whether that will was to carry a pin or a golden vessel, all was well, and he could look up from his happy God-glorifying task, and say—"This is the thing the Lord hath commanded to be done"—

"No service in itself is small
None great though earth it fill
But that is *small* that seeks *its own*
And *great* that seeks *God's will*."

O beloved! may your Lord and mine write it on our hearts and may we know the blessedness of pleasing God and serving Him acceptably with reverence and Godly fear. (Heb. xii. 28.) But this is no easy matter in this day of Babel confusion, when almost every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes, to gain the praise of men whether it pleases God or not, for now-a-days under the title of "the Lord's work" every dishonest and God dishonouring trick is played, from the flagrant cheatery of the religious bazaar to raise funds to carry on what is called "the Lord's work," down to the meaner, and more subtle treachery of a pretended life of faith, (the counterfeit of the true servant who trusts in *God* alone for the supply of all his wants) which lurks around the rich, like vultures round a carcase, while the cry of "come over and help us" from the poor and the needy falls unheeded on the covetous servant's ear. May every servant of God have grace to wash his hands of such unholy and base

approach, and be like His Lord who was the perfect servant, content to be of no reputation here, that he might finish the work His Father gave Him to do.

God has yet a dwelling place on earth, consisting of inners saved by grace builded and fitly framed together into one glorious temple; one Holy Church founded on the Rock immovable—the Christ the Son of the Living God, and during this day of grace and the Spirit's work on earth it is being builded together for the eternal dwelling place of God among men. (Rev. xxi. 3.) In the building of this temple He yet employs His Levites, as it is written "We are labourers together with God" (1 Cor. iii. 9), and in so far as His servants labour in His work in fellowship with Him they build up the body of Christ. (Eph. iv. 12.) Called to such a holy service, and to work in company with the Holy One as His fellow-workers, O how watchful we need to be, lest we grieve the Holy Ghost or power for service, or build after another pattern than the one laid down in the Word of God.

To the word of the Lord we will now turn to learn His will on this important matter of *Ministry* or *service* (the word in the Greek is the same) in the building of the Church of God the antitype of the tabernacle of Israel which we have just considered, and what we are about to read is the Master's unrepealed will for His servants in all ages; although many tell us, its now out of date" and "old fashioned," but this is only an excuse for the rejection of God's revelation of His will in Ministry, which, if it were believed and acted on, would cut at the root of all human appointment, church ordination, and giving of orders practised at this hour in the professing Church around us. It is for us, beloved, to have an ear open to the word of God, and a willing heart to obey in all things if we would please Him.

Turn to Ephesians 4th chapter, read verses 7 to 14. This is God's thoughts on Ministry. The *source* of all these gifts is the Ascended Christ. "*He gave*" gifts to men and they received them, and used them for Him. No other authority or ordination was required, and none other but *He* could confer a gift. The Church did not choose, nor the Presbytery appoint, but the Church owned and thankfully received what God had given, but had no power to control; every man who had received the gift was individually responsible to the Lord for the using of it—and so are you my brother. If the Master has given you "talents"

to use for Him, go forth and "trade" with them, or you'll blush if His coming finds them buried in your napkin." (Matt. xxv. 14-29.)

See too, the variety of ministry we find here, and for what purpose—"He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. iv. 11, 12.)

Apostles were made so by the Lord Himself, such as Peter, James, John, and Paul. We have their epistles for our edification, and thus they minister to us still. Successors they have none, except "false apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 13), ministers of Satan, of whom Paul warned the Ephesian elders to beware as "coming after him" like "greivous wolves" (Acts xx. 29), and who evidently did, calling themselves "apostles," but were tried and found "liars" (see Rev. ii. 2.) Let the modern pretensions to "restored apostles" be tried by the same test, and it will as speedily vanish, notwithstanding the glare of misplaced Scripture subtle minds have thrown around it.

Prophets too are gone. They spoke by revelation from God *apart* from the word and before the canon of Scripture was complete. Judas and Silas (Acts xv. 32) also Agabias (xxi. 10) were prophets, as well as others we read of in 1 Cor. xiv. We do not see such men now, because we do not require them; the word of God is complete, and not to be added to on penalty of a curse, and all pretended "prophecies" we now hear so much of, are the mere fancies of "false prophets" misleading unstable souls, and seeking to beguile the saint from the diligent study of the written word, wherein all the prophecies of God are stored for our practical use as a light shining in a dark place until the day dawn. (2 Peter i. 19.) *Apostles* and *Prophets* were in the "foundation" (Eph. ii. 20) of the Church, but nowhere else to be seen in the building, therefore we look not for them among the servants of Jesus Christ.

(To be continued in our next.)

Let us not be discouraged by any humiliating discoveries we may make of the evils of our hearts. God knows them all, and has provided the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, to cleanse us from all sin. R. C. C.

STEWARDSHIP.

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."
(1 Cor. iv. 2.)

STEWARDSHIP implies not the possessing of that which is our own, but the charge of that which is another's. Thus we are not only required to be wise in the use of what we hold for God but we are "required to be faithful". We are in danger of making serious mistakes in the right understanding of the relation in which we stand as servants, confounding it with the nearness and liberty of our relationship as sons. But the Holy Ghost makes a clear distinction. In the one we are before God in grace on the ground of what Christ is; in the other we stand before Him in responsibility; every talent He has entrusted us with to be rendered again with usury. It is no longer that what we have is our own, to do with it as our hearts may dictate. Whether it be gift, as in 1 Cor. iv. 1; or time, or strength, or money, we are not left to choose what we shall do with it—it is *the Lord's*. Do we thus look upon all we have without reserve? Not ours to give to Him, but His to use as He will in or by us. We are indeed left free agents in this matter, because in one sense our Lord is absent. He has left us here to trade for Him. (Matt. xxv. 16.)* He has entrusted His name, His honour, His gifts, to His saints; but for all of His that we misuse for our own self-indulgence and profit He will yet take account of His servants. Grace, indeed, will own in that day His work in us as ours, but it will be grace alone. He will put to our account service that we know not (Matt. xxv. 37), that He may have the joy of giving to each His reward. But if we have not been faithful in that which is another's, who shall give to us that which is our own? Nothing then is ours from which death can separate us, and yet we may in the use of the things lent to us for our little journey here, lay up treasure in heaven, which shall be eternally our own.

We learn the Divine estimate of stewardship from the little word "found". It gives us the thought of the searching eye of God looking for His own, seeking the fruit of that which He had sown, and for which He had watered, and waited long. It speaks to us of the light of the judgment-seat, where the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is; when no veil

* It is not intended to look at the parable of Matt. xxv. dispensationally, but with reference to the divine principles of righteousness and grace.

of outward comeliness can abide His presence, for there shall every man have praise of God.

Beloved fellow-saints, it is but a little till we stand there manifested. It will be too late then to mourn our mistakes; too late to retrace our stewardship. Shall we begin now, before Jesus comes, not to give to Him part of what is all His own, but to live in the consciousness that our lives are ransomed by blood; that every talent is taken from off the altar of consecration, so that we may use all as His, in holy fear, as stewards required to be faithful. A. E. W.

EPHESIANS, CHAPTER VI.

SCRIPTURE should not be read for one purpose only. It should be read not only for light in doctrine, but also for correction and instruction in righteousness. Our progress in the energy and in the power of communion with God should be commensurate with our progress in knowledge. One person may read altogether for light, another for comfort, a third for searching the conscience, but to read for blessing, we must allow the Word to effect *all* its objects. For blessing, we must also feel its personal application.

A lovely picture may be presented to my mind, but I may not realise my position in it; so of the inheritance; or we may speak of brands plucked from the burning and not realise it of *ourselves*. A leading feature in this chapter is, that it represents believers as soldiers in the midst of enemies. Do we realise that we are the soldiers of Jesus Christ?—surrounded by malignant foes. This epistle very specially presents to us our privileges, and shews us our position in heavenly places, but also does, in a special manner let us see that we are brought into conflict, in those places, with powers and principalities, as in verses 12, 13. We contend not as Israel of old. We have other enemies to combat, even spiritual ones. To fight successfully with them, the Apostle declares that the whole armour of God is necessary. The first thing which a quickened soul learns is *truth*, a guileless heart, *before God*: he first gets faith, then righteousness, and next peace. The most miserable state is a quickened soul without peace. These several pieces of the armour spoken of here, we gather up by the way—we must then keep all together, what we get, we must have, as at the first. "Take the shield of faith," none of these could be

attained without faith. It is faith which apprehends the cross, so now it is not only faith that reconciles us to God, but faith to believe every truth, every promise, the faith of the martyrs that quenched the fiery darts of the evil one. Such faith becomes hope, which carries us within the veil. The truth of God's Word should not be stated abstractly, but should be personally applied.

THE BASKET OF FIRST FRUITS.

DEUTERONOMY XXVI.

AS soon as the nation was settled in the promised inheritance, they were to fill this basket with all the fruit of the land, and to offer it before God's altar, confessing that all His promises had been made good.

He had taken them from their ruined and perishing estate, delivered them from the land of their bondage, and not left them till He had planted them in their goodly land of milk and honey, of which this offered basket was the witness and the sample, and then they were to rejoice in all the good the Lord had thus done to them. This was, as it were, the first offering of the nation, the first sacrifices laid on the altar of God. It was the full overflowing witness of *His own mighty acts in their behalf*. It was the nation telling the Lord what He had done to them, and done for them, and their joy in all this, while it was His praise. Sacrifices and services might fill the house of God afterwards, but this was the first offering in the sanctuary, and so, in some sense, was it the sweetest, for it told the blessed God of His *own* doings. It did not so much express the obedience of the nation, as the goodness and truth of the nation's Lord. And so should it be with us, let us give our God the same overflowing basket, let us offer to Him the same witness of His doings for us, let liberty in the conscience tell Him the value of the blood which He has given for us, let joy of heart tell Him of the value of the portion He has laid up for us, let affections fill and run forth at the remembrance of His love, and His salvation, and these will be our *first* and *sweetest* offerings. Ephesus lost her first love, and that spoiled all her service. The fruit in the basket had withered a little, for, in principle, it was to abide, in all its freshness, before the altar continually. May we rejoice in what our God has done for us, maintain our first love, keep the basket filled with its fresh first fruits, before the Lord. Whatever else comes into the Temple, let that abide before the Lord *continually*.

J. G. B.

CHINA.

THE following paragraphs are from a private letter from an Oxford graduate, who has gone forth at his own expense to preach the Gospel in China :—

"I have decided at present, at least, to study neither theology nor medicine. I know that lay or unclerical Missionaries, so called, are very much looked down upon in China by their more regular brethren, and by the community at large; and I doubt not it is the same at home. If I thought four sessions at our Hall would be well-occupied time, I should readily come home, for the voyage is a most pleasant one, and full of interest in many ways. But from what I have seen of the Chinese, and of Missionaries to the Chinese, my present opinion is that technical theological knowledge is of little or no use. Of course it has great educational value, but then I have had as good an education already as most Missionaries have had. What is wanted is spiritual power, not mere theoretical acquaintance with the Word of God. In travelling in China, far from European protection, one always meets with difficulties and dangers which no amount of human foresight can obviate. The Chinese Government opposes us. The Chinese people hate and distrust us, and the English Government does all it can to keep Missionaries to the Free Ports. To whom, then, can we apply for help but to the Lord Himself, to Him who says He won't fail us? I believe I should get a greater personal knowledge of the Lord during four years' itinerant work in Quei Chow, than during the same period at home with my books in my study.

"Then again, as a matter of fact, the average period of residence of Missionaries in China is but a few years. So many either get tired of it, or fail in health. The further roughing it in the interior, in the intense heat of summer and the cold of winter, with Chinese food and Chinese accommodation, and long walks and rides on Chinese roads, requires all the strength that most people have in their most robust days. Further, the younger I am the more easily I can assimilate myself to Chinese habits and hardships, and the less difficulty may I expect with Chinese. In the face of all this, *dare* I take five or six years off the period of my service? The sermons, &c., which we preach to the Chinese are such as we would be ashamed to address to a sharp Sunday school scholar; and, as far as my experience goes, the older the Missionary the simpler

his addresses. Of what use, then, would profound knowledge of European Ecclesiastical History, for instance, be ?

"Medicine may be a useful auxiliary where you have plenty other Europeans and established work, but at first the Chinese are intensely suspicious. They think we wish babies' eyes and hearts to make opium of, &c., &c., and it is to be presumed a Missionary's object is to preach the Gospel in the first place. Well ; in China, as a matter of fact, you can get as many people to listen as ever you like, if you take the trouble to itinerate, preach on the streets, &c., without opening dispensaries and getting into trouble about them. If I wanted to work in a port, I might be led to come home and go on with medicine, but under the present circumstances, I do not think it would be worth while.

"I have not waited until I heard what my father and sisters said to this step before starting. They consented to my being a Missionary in the first instance, so I don't see I am slighting them in any way. After all, we don't read, *'Thy friends shall hear a voice behind them saying, This is the way,'* do we ? Our responsibilities are strictly personal ones.

"I think we at home regard Missionary operations as far more formidable than they really are. I believe at ——— we have numbers of young men and young ladies who have no business at all to be there ; they should be here ; they are staying at home in direct and wilful disobedience to the Lord's orders. Chinese is not so bad as it is made out to be, and in the Free Ports you can live just as comfortably as in England, and more cheaply. If we were in earnest about Missions as we are about our business, we should find this out, and in fifteen or twenty years we should have European Christians in every town in China. And more, if we were truly in earnest about it, I am convinced that at ——— we could raise £20,000 a year for Missions, or even £50,000 if we liked to pinch a little for it.

"I consider it a disgrace and a scandal to the name of Christianity that there are not 150 or 200 men, who have been blessed and owned of the Lord at home, at work in each province in China. If the Bible is not a lie from beginning to end, and if the Lord's promise as to His presence, His protection, His giving the required money, strength, and grace, are not mere empty words, how can a Christian young man be justified in settling down at home, to heap up money contrary to the

Lord's own direct commands, while he might easily be preaching in China ? And parents ! *Can* they believe the Bible, when they so reluctantly give up their sons and daughters to such work ?"

PRISTHOOD AND MINISTRY.

IT is impossible to estimate the amount of ignorance and consequent sin that has been occasioned by the one circumstance of having lost the apprehension of the priestly calling of *all* believers. We should never have heard of sacrificing priests ; nor priests granting absolution ; nor of a select few in the Church being God's heritage (*κληροι*) to the exclusion of their brethren from the like privileges ; nor of a thousand sinful practices that have been founded on these falsehoods ; nor have seen, as we have, the energies of believers cramped and hindered, if the priesthood of the whole Church had been remembered and even feebly realised. Nevertheless, every relinquishment of error does not involve the reception of truth. So subtle is falsehood, and so great the skill of the great enemy of truth in hurrying from one extreme into another, that many, as soon as their eyes have been opened to the vain pretensions of an exclusive priesthood, have forgotten that there is a ministry though not a priesthood in the Church of God ; and that true ministers of Christ are not to be rejected because we reject pretended priests. Men in the world, under pretence of liberty and fraternity, have often sought to subvert the natural order of society, and to introduce an unholy equality where the providence of God has distinctly established differences. The same spirit, although in a different form, has frequently been found in many who, after having broken the bonds of superstition, have, nevertheless, not found the liberty of truth.

Order and subordination are everlasting principles of God, and He has not forgotten them in His arrangements of the Church. All members in the natural body, says the Apostle, have not the same office ; so, likewise, in the Church all are not apostles, nor prophets, nor teachers (see 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29) ; and, again, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, we are taught that if the individual members of the Church are, in their private sphere, to be fitted for ministration one towards the other, in the varied circumstances of daily life, their ability thus to help one another is the result

of God's having provided pastors and ministers of His word, through whom they who are thus ministered to, are prepared for ministration towards each other.* No passage can more clearly show that Christ has given to some in the Church an office which He has not given to all, namely, the ministry of His word, or the pastoral care of His people. If this all-important distinction, under pretence of securing liberty to the Spirit of God, or on any other ground, is subverted, ignorance, and sins of ignorance, with their necessary results, again abound. Ministerial position is again assumed by those to whom God has not given it; democratic license is found under the name of liberty, and the disorder that is generated becomes the more revolting, because of its pretension to be the result of closer obedience to the Holy Spirit.—*Extracted from "Thoughts on Leviticus".*

“THE OTHER COMFORTER.”

IT is perfectly certain we can take but little pleasure in the presence of another unless we love him; and our love will mainly depend on our knowledge and estimate of his character. It was on this principle that the Apostles had more real enjoyment of Christ after He went away from them than they ever knew before. While He was with them in person, they had little perception of His spiritual beauty and excellence—they saw not the Lord or saw Him but dimly—they beheld the Perfect One in a glass darkly; and while, in Him, all heaven was before their eyes, that heaven was wrapt in clouds, which their feeble sight could not penetrate. He went away from them that He might send the Spirit—He sent the Spirit that when they saw Him again, they might the more enjoy His presence and companionship.

Such is the explanation of His own words—“It is better for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come”. It was as if He had said to the wondering men who stood around Him—“You do not know Me yet—you do not really discern and value the Only-begotten of the Father—and yet He is essential to your happiness—He is your life, your heaven, your all; and therefore you must be taught to

* The passage is as follows:—“He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for (with reference to *πρωτοι*) the perfecting of the saints, unto (*εic*) the work of ministration, unto (*εic*) the edifying the body of Christ.”

know Him, and the Holy Ghost must come to be your Teacher, for He alone is able fully to reveal to your hearts what I am, and the purpose of My coming”.

What Jesus said to His first disciples He said to all—“If I go away I will send Him”. The promise is fulfilled, and the heart of every believer is able, or should be so, to testify to its accomplishment. If it be asked, For what purpose does the Holy Ghost now dwell within us? this is the answer—To advance us in practical holiness and love—to keep Jesus ever before us as crucified, risen, and coming again—to make us strong, and faithful, and happy in His service—to fill us with love and capacitate us for the enjoyment of heaven; but above all to reveal Jesus Himself to the understanding and the affections. Thus it is that the other Comforter, dwelling in the heart, is *better for us* now than the personal presence of the Lord Himself. Without the light of this divine Teacher it would not be valued by us as it ought to be, nor would the expectation of His return be fraught, as it now is, with the deepest delight to our hearts. But the followers of Jesus, taught as they are by the Spirit of Love, learn to prize it more and more—the person of the Lord becomes every day more precious to their souls; so that when Jesus at length appears they will behold Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

DAVID.

DAVID walked with God in his calling, in his daily life, and so was ready for any service to which he might be called. He was a clean vessel fit for the Master's use, foreshadowing Him, the true David, Jehovah's beloved servant, who was a shaft hid in His quiver, never spotted nor dull of point or edge, always bright and sharp ready at any moment for his Father's use. Beloved fellow-believer, should we not covet above all things thus to walk with God, that when service is needed, God may take us up at once and use us.

David was ready, and his next step, although an ordinary one, had extraordinary results; like Moses, who, when changing the pasture for his flock, an ordinary circumstance, came to the Mount of Jehovah, from thence to be sent back to Egypt as Israel's deliverer; Rebecca also, going to fetch water from the well met Abraham's servant, and eventually with

Isaac ; and Samaria's daughter on a similar errand, found the Messiah and then led others to Him.

Such instances should teach us the importance of our every day steps as believers, to be careful to walk in obedience to the Word of God, having our entire spiritual being under the guidance of the Holy Ghost ; for we also have proved, and shall again, unlooked for results from ordinary movements.

What was David's step ? One of obedience to his father and kindness to his brethren, but Jehovah had ordered the occasion through Israel's difficulties with the Philistines, and especially through their champion Goliath ; it was the divinely appointed time and opportunity for Jehovah to bring forward the man of His choice, and Israel's future king.

God's gifts are not only good in themselves, but always well timed, reserved until they are most needed and will be most highly valued. He who had trained Moses eighty years, chose the time for bringing him forward as His servant ; He who filled Joseph with wisdom made the opportunity for its development by Pharaoh's dream ; He who filled David and his fellows with heavenly wisdom ordered for its display, and at the very moment ordained sent His Son into the world ; the same also appointed David his service and the time for it.

Instructed by his father, he arose in the morning and commenced his journey to the camp, to salute his brethren, take the father's present to their captain and to them, and take his brethren's pledge.

Like Abraham, who, having been called and instructed rose up early to do the will of Jehovah, painful as it was, even to offer up his only Isaac to Jehovah. This has a voice to us whatever be the intimation made of God's mind by His Word, and whenever made, let us act as he did who said, "*I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy precepts*". *Obedience deferred is obedience made more difficult.*

David arrived at the camp just as Goliath proudly presented himself, challenging the hosts, defying the armies of Israel. The people naturally drew David's attention to the man, and while they were enumerating the honours to be bestowed on the man who should conquer him, his eldest brother Eliab, who followed Saul to the battle, came up ; vexed at the sight he blamed David, charging him with pride and naughtiness of heart, with curiosity to see the battle.

All this, I think, betrayed the general mind and spirit of Eliab, mortified pride at having been refused

as Israel's king and envy of his brother, who had been chosen and anointed, then manifested themselves.

David, like Joseph, endured much from his own family on account of Jehovah's choice.

Dear reader, beware of envy which is as rottenness to the bones, eating out the believer's peace and joy. Beware also of rash judgment, concluding from appearances ; and also of thinking evil, *i.e.*, imputing wrong motives. Divine love "thinketh no evil".

David heard, but rose above his brother's hard words, and quietly said, "What have I now done, is there not a cause ?" then turning to the men resumed the interrupted conversation respecting Goliath and the rewards for killing him.

But we must not pass over David's wise words to his upbraiding brother, "Is there not a cause ?"

Indeed there was a double reason for his presence. 1st, as between son, father, and brethren, for he had come in obedience as a son, and with the tenderness of a brother for his brethren ; but the 2nd was a deeper reason between Jehovah, himself, and Israel—victory over the Philistine and his hosts for Israel's deliverance, and both by the simple power of Jehovah through David.

Interest was awakened by David's inquiries, and his words were rehearsed before Saul, and he sent for him.

According to the history David opened the conversation with the remarkable words "Let no man's heart fail because of him, thy servant will go and fight with the Philistine." These words astonished Saul, as they well might any, but one who like David could fully trust Jehovah, viewing the battle in God's light as between Jehovah and the Philistines, rather than between them and Israel, measuring the giant and estimating his skill and force, not by himself but God.

Beloved, let us seek to abide in the presence of God, in His sanctuary, to see things in His light, measure with His line, and weigh with His weights, both persons and circumstances ; doing this we shall find ourselves sufficient for every trial and conflict through which he may cause us to pass.

Saul, judging after the sight of his eyes, and from a human stand point, naturally remonstrated with the ruddy youthful shepherd, and at once determined against him, as unable to fight with one who from his youth had been a man of war, well skilled in fencing and the tactics of war, able in single combat to parry well the stroke, and give the fatal thrust, whose

frightened all the hosts of Israel, and even if.

Let these objections by the simple relation of once in his own life and experience; a fact, for the occasion, we might never have known. He kept his father's sheep, and there came a bear and took a *lamb* out of the flock, and after him and smote him, and delivered it from his mouth, and when he arose against me, I met him by the beard and smote him and slew him. He slew both the lion and the bear, and this same Philistine shall be as one of these, who hath defied the armies of the living God. He that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the paw of this Philistine." This simple narrative, when, silenced Saul's objections, and he said, "Jehovah be with thee."

Let us pass on from this beautifully simple narrative to its comment, for it is fraught with instruction. David's occupation; he kept his father's flock in the heart of a true son, taking interest in the flock as they had been his own; not a hireling, a mercenary. Surely in this he foreshadowed Him who said, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and my father knows them; and I lay down my life for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and my father knows them; and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Intruders, a lion and a bear, beasts of prey, and the subtlety and power of the enemies of the sheep, Satan and his agents.

Object of attack, a *lamb*; the feeble and weak of the flock, without which it could not live. Satan hates the entire flock of Christ, and has all been rescued from his grasp, but he has the advantage of the small spiritual intelligence and of the weak ones, he seeks to turn aside the attacks the *lamb*s.

Encounter and the rescue, "I went after him and delivered it from his mouth," he himself, he as men would say, hazarded his life, but we say he trusted God for the rescue of his father's flock, and succeeded.

We are reminded of the true David's words, "The good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep, he not only exposed his life, but he went to take it again, and if for the flock, then he died for that flock, even for the lamb. Thrice blessed we are in having such a shepherd, to save,

feed, and guide the flock through this wilderness world to the only fold for us, the glory of the Father's presence.

5. The final victory. The rescue of the lamb by David irritated the devourers, and they turned upon the rescuer, "And when he arose against me I caught him by the beard and slew him". And did not our David encounter the devourer? He did, and will He not shortly bruise Satan under our feet. He will. Thus must it be with us also. Nothing provokes Satan more than disinterested care for souls, whether that care is exercised by the Evangelist or the shepherd; both must encounter his attacks, spiritually natural care, *i.e.*, care springing spontaneously from the new life, new creatures, not induced either by love of money, or love of power (1 Peter v. 3, 4), manifest care for the lambs and sheep of Christ must bring upon the caretaker, the subtle and mighty assaults of him who as a roaring lion, or as an angel of light, goeth about seeking to devour.

To return, Saul had said, "go," but then it must be in *his* way, soldier to meet soldier: and he commenced by arming David with a coat of mail (what a burden), and other military attire, which only increased David's burden and wasted time. David, although he put them on, or allowed Saul to do so, was yet wise enough to say, "I cannot go in them, for I have not proved them". No; he had proved the sling and the stone, and simple trust in Jehovah's power, but not Saul's armour, neither would he go in them; he was not a trained soldier, therefore he would not appear like such; he was a shepherd, and as such he would in faith with sling and stone encounter his foe.

Dear reader, beware of assumption of show; let us be real, and instead of seeking to be more than we really are, let us imitate Paul, who was careful lest men should think of him above that which they heard of him or saw him to be (2 Cor. xii. 6); above all, like Him who, being sent of the Father, *sought not* His own glory, but left it to the Father to secure it for Him.

H. H.

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THE OX AND THE ASS YOKED TOGETHER.

DEUTERONOMY XXII. 10.

THE Statutes of the Old Covenant were specially given to and adapted for the people of Israel in the land of Canaan, and if imposed upon the Gentile, would have proved to be an intolerable burden.* (See Acts xv. 10 and 28). Nevertheless, Scripture abundantly shows that even the most apparently trivial enactments of the law have a deep spiritual significance, and therefore are intended to convey to the children of God in all ages an understanding of His thoughts and ways.

Such is the character of the one above referred to:—Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together".

The ass was ceremonially an unclean animal. It parts the hoof, but does not chew the cud. (Lev. xi. 8.) It is specially named in connection with the sanctifying of the first-born of man and beast:—Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb, and if thou wilt not redeem it then thou shalt break his neck, and all the first-born of man among thy children thou shalt redeem". (Ex. xiii. 13.)

It could not be offered in sacrifice, neither could it be eaten by the people of Jehovah. If its life was spared on judgment, it was only on such terms as the first-born of guilty man, through being redeemed by a lamb.

* It is not intended here to dispute that even "the letter" of the Levitical precepts contains the purest and wisest of all instruction upon social and even political economy, by taking heed to which, both men and Christians would be gainers as to the affairs of this life beyond what they imagine. See also in this respect the much neglected book of Proverbs.

It was therefore not fitted to represent either Christ as offered in sacrifice, or His people as cleansed by Him, but rather man in his natural unregenerate condition.

The ox or bullock was, on the contrary, ceremonially clean. It parts the hoof and chews the cud. It has a prominent place among the offerings of Jehovah, and as the food of His people. Therefore it fitly represents Christ as offered to God for us, and also as given to us by God. But the type extends further, and whilst primarily the "clean" animals represent Christ as God's spotless and unblemished offering, they also represent those who, being cleansed in His most precious blood, are "clean every whit"—"accepted in the Beloved".

The prohibition to plow with an ox and an ass together is unmistakably referred to in II. Cor. vi. 14, and here we have the divine commentary expounding the spiritual application of the command exactly in accordance with the Levitical surroundings of the ordinance.

The command spiritually applied in the New Testament is quite as plain as in the old. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." But with what subtlety and effrontery Satan opposes or seeks to neutralize every precept of the Lord! When pressing this command upon the consciences of God's children, how constantly is it cast aside with the remark—"It is impossible to tell who are believers and who are not," "the tares and the wheat must grow together," "you are commanded not to judge," &c., &c. As if the Apostle would exhort the saints to a separation that is impossible; as if the tares and the wheat being allowed

till the end of the age to *grow together in the world* * implied their being yoked together in the church; as if the command not to judge implied that the believer was to close his divinely enlightened eyes to the difference between light and darkness, between life and death, between Christ and Belial.

The instruction of this passage is couched in the form of an appeal to the understanding and spiritual instinct of the saints, rather than as a mere arbitrary command. It is not a call to separation merely because God wills it, though that would have been abundant warrant for giving earnest heed; but in addition to this, the reason is given, viz, the utter incompatibility of the two.

Thus side by side are ranged two lines of opposing elements :—

Righteousness	Unrighteousness
Light	Darkness
Christ	Belial
He that believeth	Infidel (or unbeliever)
Temple of God	Idols

Such is the contrast as seen by God between His saints and the world. Well might the Lord Jesus say, in view of so amazing a contrast, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world".

The Christian is, as to his standing before God, judicially *righteous*. He is made "the righteousness of God" in Christ. (II. Cor. v. 21.) Moreover, he is in character—as to the new man—"created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 24) "after the image of Him that created him". (Col. iii. 10.)

The natural man is before God *unrighteous*. As a branch of a corrupt and condemned tree he is under the wrath and curse of God; and as to his character, whatever there may be of natural morality and uprightness in relation to fellow-men, there cannot but be in the sight of God the vilest unrighteousness so long as His word is disbelieved, His grace despised, His Spirit resisted, His Son rejected.

Between such what fellowship can there be? It is God that asks the question. For the unrighteous to ascend to the level of the divine fellowship of the righteous is an utter impossibility. Consequently, fellowship can only be obtained by the descent of the righteous to the level of the unrighteous; by the surrender for the time being of all that is characteristic of the calling of the saint.

* Note the Lord's own interpretation—"The field is the world," not "the church".

The Christian, as to his intelligence, is Light in the Lord, and as such is called to walk as a child of the light. (Eph. v. 8.) "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John i. 5.) He has "called us out of darkness into His marvellous light". (1 Pet. ii. 9.) As the priests of old walked in the light of the holy oil that burned in the Golden Candlestick, so in the light of the anointing of the Holy Ghost, the Uncion from the Holy One by which we know all things (1 John ii. 20) is the Christian called to walk. There, in that divine light of God's presence, the evil and the good are truly discerned by the anointed eye; the world is seen to be "sitting in darkness," content with its chains of ignorance, comprehending not the light that once shined in its midst, but hating and turning from it in unfeigned disgust (John i. 5; iii. 19), refusing the proffered deliverance from the power of darkness, and rejecting as utterly undesirable a place in the kingdom of God's dear Son. (Col. i. 13.)

Again God asks, "What communion hath light with darkness?" How can he whose eyes have been opened to behold the light of God, find aught congenial amid the thoughts and desires, the maxims and principles of the world? Surely not otherwise than by closing his eyes to the heavenly light. And sad and solemn though it be, there is a terrible possibility of the child of God descending even to this. The eye that is accustomed to the light, when introduced into comparative darkness, sees nothing at all; but soon the blinded eyeball adapts itself to the gloom, and the dim lamp that seemed at first to yield no light at all, appears almost to shine brightly. Thus it is that the spiritual eyesight of the child of God, who descends to walk in darkness, adapts itself to its surroundings, and soon becomes contented with darkness that would at one time have been midnight and misery to the soul.

Again, "what concord hath Christ with Belial?" The Christian is so perfectly joined to and identified with Christ, that in God's sight he is as a member of His body. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," and "your bodies are the members of Christ". (I. Cor. vi. 15-17.)

Belial, or the Wicked One, is a term expressive of profligacy and licentiousness.

In God's sight all are ranged on either of the two sides; either with Christ or against Him. Christ is the pattern and leader of the

e; Belial the pattern and leader of the other. How terrible for a child of God to be found having no concord or harmony with Christ's enemy! Found at the same communion table with the drunkard, or participating in the profits of the ungodly schemes of the wicked.

"What part hath he that believeth with an infidel." Some the meaning here may be obscured by the use of the word infidel as though it applied only to one who professed not to believe in the existence of God. But it is the same Greek word as that in the previous verse translated "unbeliever". At the first "all that believed were together" (Acts ii. 44); again, "believers were the more added to the Lord" (Acts v. 14). The fact that they were believers in one common Lord and Saviour—believers of the testimony of the one living God—drew them together, and in the one faith and hope they lived and rejoiced. Walking in the power of their faith, "of the rest durst no man join himself to them". (Acts v. 13.) There was nothing of importance to them which they had in common with the unbelievers. The truth which they had believed separated them from the traditions and religion of the Jew, and from the idolatry and philosophy of the Gentile. While men were eagerly looking for peace and liberty and prosperity on earth, their horizon bounded by the things seen and temporal; those that believed were looking for the return of their rejected Lord, and to an inheritance reserved in heaven. What right, therefore, or *share* had the believer with the unbeliever?

Lastly, it is asked, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Now-a-days in these days idolatry in its grosser form has ceased to exist, but not idolatry in its essence and power. It is written, "Covetousness, which is idolatry". (Col. iii. 5.) Mammon is the God of the nineteenth century. Gold adds the list of Babylon's merchandise, and souls of men come last! (Rev. xviii. 12, 13.) It is written, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee". (Lev. xiii. 5.)

Thus God would teach His children to trust in Him for their GREAT SECURITY, and not in the uncertainty of men. But the world has no faith in the care of a living God, therefore must it have its faith in that which in its eyes is most powerful to procure necessi-

ties and luxuries, to gratify lusts and ambitions, to provide protection and honour; and what so mighty as MONEY?—*Hundreds*, THOUSANDS, MILLIONS! Oh, that the children of God had their eyes opened to see that THE "LOVE OF MONEY" is as incompatible with the worship and service of the temple of God as the most monstrous idol-worship of heathendom.

O, ye of whom as living stones the temple of God is built, see to it for His glory, whose dwelling place ye are, that Mammon usurps not the place in heart and life that belongs to God alone.

Thus it is that in this weighty Scripture the essential difference between the children of God and the world is insisted on, and the command authoritatively given, "Be not unequally yoked together".

The mere fact that one is not a heathen, but a nominal Christian—a member of some Christian denomination, "having a form of godliness"—affords no ground for regarding them otherwise than simply as unbelievers if their life gives proof that their Christianity is only a form, and not in power.

It is shown in II. Tim. iii. 1-5 that such would be the special characteristic of the ungodliness of the last days.

"Traitors, heady, high-minded lovers of pleasures *more than** lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof"; then comes the separating command as plainly as in reference to Corinthian idolatry—"from such turn away".

To act thus will surely bring reproach and opposition; bitter words like arrows will privily be shot at the godly—they will be called Pharisaic, and bigoted, and narrow-minded. But notwithstanding this, it is the mind of God, and happy is he who is of one mind with Him.

Even the very apostolic command we have been considering is prefaced by the words, "Be ye also enlarged". Enlarged to embrace all that is divine, but at the same time to leave no space for that which is not according to the will of God.

J. R. C.

ISAIAH vii. 15.

"Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good." It is in feeding on the heavenly manna our souls get into fellowship with God, and grow strong in divine instinctiveness of good and evil. It is what we eat, rather than what we know, that forms the man in Christ.

* "More than" equal to "and not". See same form of expression John iii. 19—"Rather than" equal to "and not". And again Luke xviii. 14.

R E S T.

NOTES ON HEBREW IV. 1-11.

THE key-note of the chapter is rest, complete and eternal, because it is the rest of God. The thought here is not so much of a rest prepared for us, as His rest into which we are called to enter. Verse 1 speaks of a promise being "left" us, as though He who gave had bequeathed it to us, making it thus entirely our own. Let us therefore fear lest any of us should *seem* to come short of it, lest there be the very semblance of a doubt, because we enter into its fulness, not for our rest only, but for His glory. The point pressed upon us here is not so much the ground of the rest, as our fellowship in the rest of God. In Genesis i. we read that "God saw everything He had made, and behold it was very good"; but sin, entering into the heart of Eve, bore its dire fruit in death, and thus, though God's own work was perfected, and He rested on the seventh day from all that His hand had created, yet it repented Him that He had made man, and it grieved Him at His heart. Thus Satan marred creation rest. Then God chose Israel to be a peculiar people unto Himself. He said of Zion, "This is my rest"; but they corrupted themselves with the idols of the heathen, they kept not the covenant of God, they refused to walk in His law. Thus Canaan rest was broken. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound, and now God Himself has found a rest with us which neither man or Satan can touch, in the person and work of Christ. Eden rest was for Adam; Canaan rest was for Israel; redemption rest is for "whosoever will". Thus grace has overflowed man's deepest need and sin, building on the ruin the eternal rest unto which God calls His saints. Verse 2 reminds us of those "whose carcasses fell in the wilderness". The same promise was given to them as to Caleb and to Joshua, of the same victory and the same rest, but the word preached did not profit them, "not being mixed with faith in them that heard it". Here, then, is the point with which we have to do; not the security of the promise, not the glory of the rest, because both are unchangeable, but the measure in which faith receives, and thus makes it all her own.

Verse 3. "We, which have believed, do enter—or are entering—into rest." It is a present possession, waiting for our enjoyment, untouched by anything we are or have. There is a sense in which, as saved ones,

we all rest in the blood shed for us. But what of the little waiting time? Is not this often the secret of the unrest of God's saints? They can take His word for the past, and trust His promise for the future; but, ah! this little while between, so full of busy cares and temptations, how often the voice of our Beloved is lost amidst them. It may be the world's poor empty joys have lost their glitter for us, but are its cares less withering? Surely the one act of resurrection, that once lifted us in Christ out of earth's condemnation and judgment, freed us also in our Father's purpose from all the surroundings of our sojourn here, save as we pass through as strangers. All that is our own gone up with Him; our interest, hopes, and affections already within the veil, because Christ is there. To know this is deep and blessed rest. But it is now (v. 3) as when God swore concerning Israel, "If they shall enter into my rest," although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For (v. 4) "He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works," and yet (v. 5), in this place again, "If they shall enter into My rest". Thus the whole question lay with Israel; Canaan and victory waited for them, but (v. 6) "they entered not in because of unbelief".

Verse 6. But God must have sharers in His rest. Oh, the blessedness of this divine necessity of His grace! "Some *must* enter therein." We have seen that when God entered into His creation rest, He gave to Adam rest in Eden. When He sought a rest in Israel, He gave to them Canaan for an inheritance, and when man had been tried to the uttermost and failed, and God entered into His unchangeable rest, still, in the fulness of His grace, He would not rest alone, and therefore (v. 7) we have mention of another rest, spoken of by David in Psalm xcv. It is a rest for "To-day". The voice is ever calling. The only preparation is the attentive ear—"If ye will hear His voice".

Verse 8. Joshua had not given them rest, else the Holy Ghost by David would not afterwards have spoken of another day: therefore v. 9, there remaineth yet a rest to the people of God. For v. 10 "He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His". How blessed then this rest! it is a ceasing for ever from our own works as to service as well as salvation because we have entered in spirit into the eternal calm of the presence where Christ has for us sat down. Sin and

ment for ever behind us, we press on to the glories to come. No longer our own to will or to work, we yield ourselves to God, to will and to do in us, and in us, of His good pleasure. But there is another rest, of this blessed rest, for it knows no limit. In every circumstances here, we can rest where God will.

Does sorrow or care come? If God has rest for us, then it is our portion too. He has made it for us. He has undertaken to bring us out of it. His resources are unfailing. He will enable us to prove by the depth of our need, the depths of His mighty sympathies. If we can lay our heads on His bosom—if we can say, He careth for me, and He will prove the fellowship of His rest. Verse 11. "Give diligence to your labour" (Newberry's trans. 'Give diligence') "before you enter into that rest." And wherefore? Because of all within and around us, ever tending to disturb our rest. We labour because of what we are: we rest because of what CHRIST is. As it has been written, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," reigning above it all. Not peace with the world, but the blessed be His name that cannot be broken, but the peace of his own Heart as He sits upon the throne. Look back and see Jesus given for us: to look forward and see Him given to us, as the gladness of our life: to know that here He careth for us, He waits and longs for us—this, this is rest. As to the actual realization, it lies indeed beyond us, for we have an unbroken Sabbath keeping (v. 9, margin) and abide in our heavenly house, but circumstances and secondary things, and inasmuch as the presence of God, whether in the wilderness or the glory, is our unchangeable rest, we may enjoy even now its foretaste, and thus begin by faith already to enter in. Sons and heirs of God, our eternal life begun. Why not our rest? The fellowship He gives us 1 John i. 3 is not something that we exchange with these mortal bodies, but the beginning of our unending day. Shall we not give place even now to enter into its fulness, that we may glorify Him who purchased it for us with His own blood?
A. E. W.

JOB, XVII. 4.

Heart hid from understanding, not understanding hidden from the heart. "Wisdom crieth in the street"; "she standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths;" but, "Wherefore is a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, when he hath no heart to it." "The veil is upon their eyes."

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

By W. LINCOLN.

PART II. DIALOGUE II., FROM CH. III. 8, TO V. 1.

(Continued from Page 71.)

AND now, having commended her beauty in His eyes in those seven particulars, concerning which the tender touching language wherein His praise is couched, we have reflected, He now gently discloses His further will concerning her, in His *second* invitation. I have already remarked that in each dialogue of this second part there is to be found an invitation of His. And here in ch. iv. 6, He hints it, and then as if she were unready to understand it, He expresses His desire more plainly in verse 8. I am the more confirmed in the opinion that she was loth to perceive what He had implied in verse 6, so that He was constrained to speak out fully His mind in verse 8, partly because both with His *previous* invitation in ii. 10, and repeated in ii. 13, she had hesitated for a while to comply, and had suffered in consequence, iii. 1, but had at length begun to obey, iii. 6; and also with His *next*, the third, invitation, found in ch. v. 2, there is seen to be exhibited by her the same unreadiness, ch. v. 3; but further proof of her disinclination here to follow Him is furnished in the fact of the Lord's pause in the expression of His will in order to repeat His delight in her beauty. For this likewise had been His way, namely, to refer, though in symbolic language, to her salvation and regeneration as grand realities, when He had encouraged her unwilling to come out to Him, i. 11-13. And hence, as here she again exhibits herself hardly persuaded, save with line upon line, to do as He would have her, therefore He points to Her *standing* in order that she may thereby correct her *state*. For when the heart is full of the love of God and when we are full of the Holy Ghost, surely a word, a hint, a look, are sufficient to make us on the alert gladly to do or to suffer His will. But alas! who of us is not conscious how sometimes we have hesitated to follow whither yet he has distinctly beckoned us. And specially in this second invitation in iv. 8, which, divested of its symbolic phraseology, is a call to be done with borderland religion, is a call to out-and-out identification with Himself, and that by the most pathetic and powerful of all appeals, to wit, by a reference to His death and merits for her, iv. 6; who of us does not know that with

this call to separation from the religious world which killed Him and which repents not of its sin, there is that in us which renders it most painful to comply. For who naturally does not prefer ease to struggle, and the praise of men to painful testimony against the entire course of this world, and specially of its religion? Lebanon, and Amana, and Shenir, and Hermon, are all mountains in the north-east of Palestine; all form part of the same mountain range. Let any reader look at the map and see the relation of Lebanon to Palestine, how that it is just upon its edge, and he will be constrained to feel that what such a place is to the rest of the Holy Land in the poetic style of this song; such in the more outspoken or well understood language of prophecy is the *Laodiceanism*, the neither hot nor cold condition of the religious world of the present day. There, though sleepy and half-hearted souls may not be aware of it, there lie concealed the *lions* in their dens and the beautiful but stealthy and bloodthirsty leopards, iv. 8. And thus whilst the Lord's first invitation after salvation is to separation with Him from sin in general, from all sin, and from the world, ii. 10-13; here His call is further to separation from the half-hearted, the apathetic, the heartless, religious "Christian world".

Four different mountains are specified in the course of this song. First we read of the "mountains of Bethel" in ii. 17; next of the "mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense" in iv. 6; then of "the mountains of the leopards" in iv. 8; and lastly of "the mountains of spices" in viii. 14. Now these are admirably named in their respective order. For first the explanation of the mountains of Bethel (or division, see margin) is afforded us in ch. ii. 8-9, when the gradual manner of the approach of the Lord at His first advent to His people and to their real condition, is traced by the striking change of language first from mountains to hills, next from hills to a wall, next from a wall to windows, and ultimately from windows to a lattice, showing Himself through it. Thus did He by grace and blood at length reach us who had got away from Him, and who in His love was pleased to come after us and that until He found us. Our sins had separated between us and our God. But He put them away by His death. Accordingly in the second place we read of the "mountains of myrrh". And as if this wondrous change were not expressive enough, or lest we should think of the death of God's only Son in its negative

aspect only as putting away sin, the other term, I mean "the hill of frankincense," is added. For His work consummated on Calvary, His blood-shedding there is the one most mighty and perfect work, is the one most precious sacrifice that ever was or could be offered unto God. On the merit of that accomplished work the entire new creation is ever to rest. On account of it are we brought nigh to God. Its fragrance shall fill eternity. Its perfection shall be the one theme of all the ransomed in heaven and earth, whilst its intrinsic value, all of it is known and prized adequately by God alone. This is that "mountain of myrrh and that hill of frankincense". What a change from the mountains of Bethel—of division, to be sure! What hath God wrought!

By nature and by practice too, so very far from God,
Yet now by grace brought nigh to Him through faith in
Jesus' blood.

But on the other hand, we must never forget, thirdly, that the Cross, if it displays God's love, also displays man's hate, and the devil's power to be absolute over man. So successful is Satan in his wiles, that he could induce man to cast out and slay Him who alone could bless the world. And hence in immediate juxtaposition with the mountain of myrrh and with the hill of frankincense, we read of "the lion's den and of the mountains of the leopards." For even now underneath all its professed friendship for the name of Christ, there is lying latent and ill-concealed the most decided hostility to God and to His Son. He quickly finds this out who sets himself in very deed to obey His word and heartily and truly to follow Him. The opposition of the openly ungodly is not to be compared with the malevolence in word and deed of the religious world. Protest against its heartlessness you may as long as you like, without experiencing its scorn and ill will, provided you continue in association with it; but prove that you mean what you say by separation from it and by persistent testimony to its sin and coming doom in that separated position, and you will quickly find that its profession of friendship for Christ is but a thin veil to hide its hate of everything born of God. But Jesus our Lord has departed! On the Cross He closed His connexion with man in flesh. (See 2 Cor. v. 16.) In resurrection he has taken a new position. And by the Cross he separates us too from the world, of which once we formed a part, and in His resurrection and ascension He fully associates us with Himself as

His brethren. Well therefore does the whole of this Song of Solomon end as indicating that Christ finally comes to us by the way of the mountains of spices, the fourth and last in this list of mountains, viii. 14. For when the Lord returns, His advent will be the climax and due close of His ascension, even as the ascension is the completion of His resurrection. By the Cross He reached us; through His resurrection we live unto Him, 1 Pet. i. 3. Through His ascension and session at the right hand of God greater grace still is poured upon us, and His coming to receive us to Himself is the fit consummation of this display of infinite grace. Hence, well therefore may the Bride there be heard ejaculating, "Make haste, my Beloved!"

But now here he asks her that until the day breaks and the shadows flee away, she will "*come with*" Him to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense and from Lebanon! He only utters His will impliedly, I say, in verse 6, but because we are dull of hearing and do not at once readily see that by His Cross we too are crucified to the world and to its religion,* and the world crucified to us, therefore does He in verse 8 speak out plainly, and saying not once only but twice, "With me from Lebanon, with me from Lebanon". Oh, surely the worst he has to offer, if indeed we can esteem the taking up His Cross to follow Him a worst at all,—surely the worst he has to offer is better than the best of the world. Moses did not esteem the *pleasure* of Christ's love greater riches than the pleasure of Egypt! It was the *reproach* for Christ that he thus preferred to all Egypt's glory. Shall we then seek to know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, and to be made conformable to His death, caring for nothing but that by any means and along any road we attain to "the out resurrection, the one from among dead ones" (Phil. iii. 11, Greek) or shall we be of those who mind earthly things? Oh! may His loving and gracious appeal find a response from every corner of our hearts, Come with Me from Lebanon, with Me from Lebanon. Thus shall we "stand fast in" Him our Lord, as "dearly beloved," Phil. iv. 1. If in our rejection by the world for His sake we were left to go alone, it might have

* Galat. vi. 14. It should be borne in mind that throughout the Epistle to the Galatians the word "world" is used emphatically of this world's religion, as of Judaism, which was for blessing man here. But one sight of the glorified Christ delivered Paul, as he says in ch. 1, from the whole thing. It had departed as a dream.

been difficult. But oh! when He says, "with Me, with Me," who can refuse Him?

Hence His heart is ravished He declares in iv. 9, "with one chain, or rather *crease* of the neck, as we *begin* to turn round on all that once allured us, and just set out in company with Him. Oh! the glowing language of this ninth verse, as if so little pleased Him, provided only that there is truth in the inward parts, and that the surrender of ourselves to Him is sincere and upright. He will lead us on and on and into further difficulties and dangers. But *there* He will be with us. It is "IN all these things," and not in the avoidance of them, that we are made more than conquerors, Romans viii. 37. The road to the Kingdom is along the pathway of suffering and of identification with Him as the rejected One. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

WORKING FOR CHRIST.

THUS SAITH THE LORD—"WHATSOEVER THY HAND FINDETH TO DO, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT." "HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR." "THE WISE SHALL UNDERSTAND." "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

BRETHREN IN THE LORD,—Permit one whose name is not worth naming (except as found in Jesus) to bring under your notice some thoughts which have occupied his mind for some time. I believe that God's children, like Timothy, need to be put in remembrance not to "neglect the gift which is in them, but to stir it up". The last verse of 1 Cor. xv. tells us to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. Some children of God are so steadfast and unmoveable that they do not put into practice the middle of the verse, "always abounding in the work of the Lord". This ought not to be. God has not called us to be idlers, mere cumberers of the ground. No, no. The Lord Jesus "left us an example that we should follow in his footsteps". We are called with a holy and heavenly calling. We are not our own; we are the Lord's; and it is our duty and privilege to labour for Him while here. He has work for all who love and fear Him. "Go ye out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." "Let him that heareth say come." Necessity is laid upon

us, yea, woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, "for," said he, "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth". Many of God's children now-a-days are practically ashamed of it—whether wilfully or ignorantly, God is judge. They can talk upon any and every subject to the unconverted, save that one which is of intrinsic value to them, viz., the gospel of God's free grace, the gospel of Christ's free salvation, which is for all who are willing to receive it as a free gift. When an opportunity of saying a word for Jesus presents itself they are dumb. Is this not a fact? How needful it is to carry about with us always a savour of the Lord Jesus, and so to be ready to speak a word in season. How many are in hell who never were faithfully warned of their danger by God's redeemed ones with whom they came in contact.

There is a very solemn text in God's Word which often comes up to me—Ezek. iii. 18: "When I say unto the wicked thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand". The child of God is here held responsible for his fellowmen. Solemn responsibility. Would to God that we who are blood-bought realized it. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." We shall indeed wear a crown in glory if we believe in Jesus, but it will be a starless one if we do nothing for Him. No cross, no crown; no grace, no glory; no work, no reward. Saved, yet so as by fire.

O child of God! awake out of sleep; arouse thee and work for Jesus, who has done so much for thee. Thou hast work to do for Him which no one else can accomplish. Do it while thine opportunity lasts, while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work.

Harlan Page, a humble worker in the vineyard, who on his deathbed could say that he, through God's grace, had been the means of saving at least one hundred souls, on the subject of speaking for Christ, says:—"An excuse is made by many which I conceive will not bear the scrutiny of the judgment day. They say they have not the talents for addressing the impenitent and conversing with them on the subject of religion. But are the simple truths of the gospel so dark that only the learned can understand them? Are

the words, 'He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned,' so obscure that we cannot properly impress them upon others? Is the road to perdition so plainly described in the Bible, and can we raise no warning voice to the throngs who travel in it? Is the happiness of the righteous and the everlasting torments of the impenitent so clearly described, and can we see friends around us crowding their way to despair with our lips closed in perpetual silence? The truth is, our faith in eternal realities is weak and our sense of duty faint while we thus neglect the salvation of our fellow-beings. Let us awake to duty; and while we have a tongue or pen devote them to the service of the Most High, not in our own strength, but with strong faith and confidence in Him." Akin to this is the language of the godly Baxter.

Speaking of himself, he says: "I confess to my shame that I remember no one sin that my conscience doth so much accuse and judge me for as for doing so little for the salvation of men's souls, and dealing no more earnestly and fervently with them for their conversion. I confess that when I am alone, and think of the case of poor, ignorant, worldly, earthly, unconverted sinners that live not to God nor set their hearts on the life to come, my conscience telleth me that I should go to as many of them as I can, and tell them plainly what will become of them if they do not turn, and beseech them with all the earnestness that I can, to come to Christ and change their course, and make no delay. And though I have many excuses, from other business, and from disability and want of time, yet none of them all do satisfy my own conscience, when I consider what heaven and hell are, which will one of them be the end of every man's life. My conscience telleth me that I should follow them with all possible earnestness night and day, and take no denial till they return to God."

Such is the testimony of two labourers now fallen asleep, and their words surely speak home to our hearts and consciences. Our position as believers is now outside the camp. (Heb. xiii. 13.) We have no right to go back into the camp to have fellowship with the wicked, but to separate the precious from the vile, to snatch them as brands from the fire. The world may say we are wrong in this, but what saith the Scriptures?—Eph. v. 11, 1 John ii. 15, 17, Rom. xii. 1, 2, 1 Peter i. 14, 15, &c., &c. What a privilege, what a joy it is to work for Him who has

washed us from our sins in His own blood, taken away every stain, and given us a right and title to His kingdom. Surely it becometh us to devote ourselves to Him and His loving service.

When Jesus stood at the grave of Lazarus he said "Take ye away the stone". What a lesson of service we learn here. Jesus stood ready to speak the resurrection word, but before He did this He wanted something done—the stone must be taken away. He could easily have accomplished this without the help of man, but He wanted to teach His servants this lesson, a lesson which I hope we will never forget, viz : that He does not miracles when His work can be done without them. I am afraid we sometimes err here. The bringing of a sinner from darkness into light is certainly a miracle. The opening up of the way for God to accomplish this is not a miracle, but a blessed service for Jesus, just as the taking away of the stone was to those whom Jesus asked to do it. Now, where do we err? We ask God to save such and such a one, but we have never had the moral courage to preach the gospel to that one. We have never in all our lifetime, it may be, spoken to that one about the great salvation, or done anything whereby he through us might know that he was a lost sinner, and that it was such Jesus came to seek and save. I fear many of God's children are hinderers instead of helps in the field through not knowing the Lord's mind in this matter. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" In gospel work it is often needful to remember the words of Jesus, "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves". It is quite scriptural to be instant in season and out of season preaching the Word, and I am not aware of any place specified in the Bible where it ought not to be preached. Of course, man will tell us it should be kept in its own place, and it should not be preached at such and such a place. This is man's idea, but "we have a more sure word of prophecy," and the example of our Lord and His Apostles cannot go for nothing. We do learn from this that it *was* sometimes expedient to refrain from preaching at certain places under certain circumstances, but this might only be for a time, and whenever the obstacle was removed the servant would be at liberty to deliver his message and proclaim the truths of the everlasting gospel. I think there is a danger, more particularly with young converts, of rushing into the

work in their own strength and with their own wisdom, without first knowing the mind of the Lord, thinking by their own effort to accomplish great things, forgetting that "the battle is the Lord's". What I want to do in writing this paper is not to discourage believers from working for Christ, but rather to encourage them, and all the more so as we see the day approaching; but let them do it in humility and for Jesus' sake, not courting persecution, but rather doing everything possible to live a holy and peaceable life.

We have loved ones in foreign lands, and as a matter of course we cannot speak to these face to face, but we can write them and tell them what the Lord hath done for us; and we can tell them of a present salvation through faith in Jesus; we can warn them of coming wrath, of coming judgment, of a coming hell, which is the sure portion of all who know not Jesus, and obey not the gospel. We can send them tracts or gospel periodicals; and thus for a few pence or shillings at most we could sow seed for reaping hereafter, and the seed sown in faith and watered by prayer could not fail to bring forth fruit. Never mind being laughed at. Though former friends give you the cold shoulder, go forward; labour on; great is the reward promised, and, more than that, it is SURE. One hour in heaven will make up for it all. It will all be forgotten when the Master says: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord". No more remembered when God Himself shall wipe away our tears.

"Work, work while it is called to-day,
The night is coming on,
The sun is in the west, and soon
Light will be gone.
All will be well in heaven above;
Life's battle fought and won;
The Master's voice to thee, sad one,
Shall say—Well done.
When work is o'er, with harp in hand,
Thou'lt praise thy God above,
And sing through all eternity
Of Jesus' love.
Work, then, while it is called to-day;
He's with us here below:
Oh, child of God, thy fallow ground
Break up and sow."

Dear Friend, stand no longer idle. Go work to-day in the vineyard. Give heed to thy Lord's commands. "The harvest is great, but the labourers are few."

"Forth to the harvest field away,
Gather up handfuls while you may,
All day long in the field abide,
Gleaning close by the reaper's side."

Beware of acting in your own strength: it is dangerous. You are sure to fail. And, besides your acting apart from God's way, apart from His help and guidance, can do nothing to advance His cause and kingdom.

Look at the case of Moses. (Exodus ii. 11-15.) Moses slew an Egyptian and had to run for it. How different in Exodus xiv. 26-31, where he acted in simple obedience to God. Go thou and do likewise, striving as much as lieth in you to live peaceably with all men. Doubtless the carnal heart will be offended at the things of God, seeing they are but foolishness to it; besides we know that the offence of the gospel has not ceased, and that men will be offended at the truth. While we are conscious of this, and willing to suffer for Christ, and anxious to serve Him, and ready to obey His commands, let us endeavour, if possible, to "give offence to no man, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God". Let us faithfully declare the whole truth of God, for it shall stand. His words shall endure.

I cannot draw this to a more fitting close than by giving you some verses which I committed to memory several years ago. They came very closely to my heart and conscience, and doubtless will do the same to many more. I do not know who is the author.

"Run! for his feet are nearing
The deathful river's brink;
Haste! ere his hand is lifted
The poisoned cup to drink.
He sees no thickening darkness,
Hears not the Jordan's swell;
Sees but life's gilded chalice,
And dreams that all is well.
O! silent voiceless Christian,
A word that soul may save:
Run, speak, if thou wouldst snatch it
From sin's eternal grave.
Tell how the Saviour sought thee,
And snatched thee back from death;
Speak, though the words drop weakly
From faltering lips and breath.
Haste! for the shadows lengthen,
The night is drawing on—
A soul waits to be rescued,
A star waits for thy crown."

R. B. G.

THE LEVITES.

PART III.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS, BY JOHN RITCHIE.

EVANGELISTS, Pastors, and Teachers, come next in order. The service of the former is toward the world with the Gospel; and the latter two toward the Church; comprising the ministry of the word, and the tending of the flock. The Lord in grace continues to give such gifts to men, fitting them for the various ministries "till we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13), which will only be when He comes. Till then *sinner*s need to hear the Gospel from the lips of the Evangelist—and *saint*s need the Pastor's care and the Teacher's instruction in the word. Let us therefore recognise and receive such, thanking God for them, while we remember Christ Jesus the Lord is the Head of the Church, and the centre of its unity. Unto Him—"Jesus only" we gather; not to His gifts however great or good, but unto Himself—as it shall be by and by above, when we gather around the Lamb slain.

O how terrible has been the Church's sin, in placing His servants before Himself, and glorying in the gift instead of the giver. Evangelists, pastors, and teachers are often gloried in among saints, and treated as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas were at Corinth; while Christ Himself stands knocking at the door without. (Rev. iii. 20.)

Let us look now a little at the work of each, and turning back to the service of the three families of Levites, viz.—Merarites, Gershonites, and Kohathites, we shall find typified in beautiful order the work of the Evangelist, Pastor, and Teacher—I will connect them thus—

Merari—The Merarites laid the foundation and built the framework of the Tabernacle.

This is the work of the Evangelist.

Gershon—The Gershonites covered with the curtains and bound up with the cords, what the Merarites had builded.

This is the work of the Pastor.

Kohath—The Kohathites carried in the vessels, and placed them in order in a builded tabernacle.

This is the work of the Teacher.

These are the workers, and this is the work of the Lord done after the due order. When the cloud rested,

the Merarite was the first workman on the spot. Upon the bare sands of the desert he commenced by laying the massive silver sockets: next the heavy boards of shittim wood overlaid with gold were raised and fitted into them, each in its own place; and finally all the boards were bound together by the bars passed through the golden rings. Thus their work was finished, and they gave place to their brethren the Gershonites.

This is the work of the Evangelist—He goes forth into the world, guided by the Spirit of God (Acts xiii. 21), to preach the Gospel. His sphere is the *world*. (Mark xvi. 15)—the city of destruction; sinners, wherever he can find them, solitary or in crowds, he appeals to; like the Merarite with the socket, he preaches Christ crucified as the sinner's foundation—this is his theme; to get sinners converted is his object. He enters city, town, village, or hamlet, chiefly where Christ is not named—"the regions beyond"—and commences his work by preaching the Cross, as Philip went to Samaria and preached *Christ* (Acts viii. 5), and to the Ethiopian in Gaza's desert and preached *Jesus* (v. 35). May brethren who preach the Gospel remember this, and keep at their *point*, "the Gospel is the power of God" (Rom. i. 16). It requires no "precedent," steppingstone, or "handmaid," as some tell us, who instead of preaching Christ crucified, spend their precious hours in preaching "temperance," morality, the law, and repentance, and I know not what else. But the silver socket, the type of Redemption through the blood of Christ, was laid on the bare sand of the desert, and to borrow the happy figure of another—the evangelist carries the Cross "to the market place of the City of Destruction," and says—"Behold the Lamb of God". What the sinner needs is Christ, and *Him* the evangelist is called to preach in the power of the Holy Ghost; and he ought to speak simply, pointedly, and plainly in a way his hearers can understand. This is the kind of preaching by means of which sinners are saved. This done, the next thing is to get the board into the socket—the convert established and settled in Christ, and filling his place in the building, the Church of the living God; and finally by means of the bars all was framed together into one tabernacle. This we find Paul did at Corinth—he preached Christ (1 Cor. ii. 2), laid the foundation (iii. 10), and "continued a year and six months preaching the Word" (Acts xviii. 11), until he left there a well-ordered assembly. At Ephesus he entered the synagogue, and for three months

preached to sinners. (Acts xix. 7.) This was not all. The Boards had to be put into the sockets and fastened together. He *separated* the disciples from the unbelievers, and for two years remained with them, teaching them publicly and from house to house. (Acts xix., 19, xx. 20.) The evangelist is responsible to God to *do*, or see this is done, and when such is not the case, the work suffers and the converts go back to the world. Many *minor* parts of Merarite or evangelistic work come in here. Some had "pins" to carry, and in the work of the Gospel the service of some, as helpers in the work may be as certain women who laboured with Paul (Phil. iv. 3), or John, Mark (Acts xiii. 5). Gaius, Lydia, and Philip lodged the Lord's servants. Others may give tracts, sing, speak to the anxious, or invite sinners to the preaching, and thus be helpers in the Gospel; alas that any should be so high-minded as not to care for such lowly work. Some would always be on the platform, whom God has not fitted to be there, rather than "carry a pin" his God-given work.

The Merarites' work being finished, their fellow-labourers, the Gershonites, commenced. Theirs was an important toil. To cover with the curtains and the heavy badger skin covering the boards of shittim wood and gold, and to bind together and strengthen with the cords, so that no storm might shake or wind destroy the lovely dwelling-place of God. This is the *pastor's* work. His is a precious, and one may add a rare gift. He ought to co-operate *with* and follow after the evangelist. His work is to *care* for and *tend* the lambs and sheep of the flock of Christ. Pastoral work requires great patience, gentleness, and faithfulness, and deep acquaintance with the heart of the Shepherd Who bled for the sheep, in His tender and self-denying love for them. Like the good, great, and chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, he must be ready to lay down his life for the brethren (1 John iii. 16), to carry the lambs in his bosom (Isa. xl. 11), to feed them (John xxi. 15), go before them (John x. 4) leading gently lest he overdrive the flock (Gen. xxiii. 13).

Several bright illustrations of shepherd or pastor work appear throughout the Word for our learning. Such as Jacob who when he tended Laban's flock was consumed by drought in the day, and by frost and ceaseless watching by night. (Gen. xxxi. 39-40.) Bethlehem shepherds watched their flocks while others slept during the lone night—watches preceding the

coming of the looked-for Messiah (Luke ii. 8), and David encountered the lion and bear to deliver his father's lamb. (1 Sam. xvii.) All these show the self-denial of a good and true shepherd. He seeks out the young one, heals the broken, feeds the standing still (Zec. xi. 17), comforts the feeble-minded, supports the weak, and warns the unruly. (1 Thess. v. 14.) Like Barnabas, he follows the evangelist, and binds together his work, exhorting the converts to cleave to the Lord. (Acts xi. 23.) Ephphras, a true Gershonite, *laboured fervently* in prayer for the saints at Colosse (Col. iv. 12), and Epaproditus *longed* after the Phillipians (Phil. ii. 25). Under this head much comes in like the cords of the Gershonite to help to bind the work together and preserve it from the enemy and the attacks of wicked men. Visiting the young believer, the backsliding, and the sick, nursing and cherishing the Lord's little ones as Saul did at Thessalonica (ii. 8). Others may gather the converts together, or have them individually in their homes as Aquila and Priscilla had Apollos instructing him in the way of God more perfectly. (Acts xvii. 24.) And continuing so to do till Jesus comes, when the faithful pastor will receive from His hand a crown of unfading glory. (1 Pet. v. 4.)

Thus the ancient dwelling-place of God in the desert was builded and compactly framed together, and if this order were observed by the servants of Christ so would the Church, the habitation of God on earth, be built up now. But how dark is the picture of failure portrayed by Jehovah Himself through the prophet—"My Tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken, my children are gone forth from me, there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains. FOR THE PASTORS ARE BECOME brutish and have not sought the Lord." (Jer. x. 23-24).

But although the building was finished, and firmly bound together and beautified, important work had yet to be done, without which no priestly service could be carried on within the holy place. The Kohathites came up bearing on their shoulders, with steady pace, the holy vessels. The Ark and Mercyseat were deposited within the vail, the Candlestick, Table of Shewbread, and Golden Altar in the holy place, while the Laver to wash the hands and feet of the priestly household, and the Brazen Altar for their offerings filled their places in the outer court. All this is divinely beautiful, and shows the work of the teacher bringing into the already gathered assembly of saints, with holy care,

and as they are able to bear them, *truths* from Word of God, the antitypes of these vessels. the Brazen Altar and Laver—the acceptance of the believer in Christ, and his daily cleansing in the Word on to the believer's standing in resurrection as a before God in His temple, worshipping at His feeding at His table, communing at His Table instructing and building up the saints on their holy faith, and labouring to present every man as—a full grown man in Christ. To be "apt to teach" he must himself be a diligent student of the Word of God and have it richly dwelling in Him. To be able to communicate it to others, and with holy diligence and watchfulness give to all food convenient for them, for babes, and strong meat for those who can labour, he must study the need of the souls of those to whom he ministers. The edification of those he ministers ought to be his object, and the glory of God his aim when this is sought, a well ordered Assembly like that in Antioch (Acts xiii. 1) will be the result. How have the Evangelist and Pastor performed their work in the gathering together of the saints, but in the order of the teacher following after and carrying in among the saints as a true Kohathite, the truths of the Word, acceptance, walk, worship, fellowship, testimony, communion with God, figured in these vessels have been allowed to furnish as the prophet Isaiah says "The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst, the young children ask bread, and there is no man breaketh it unto them." (Lamentations ii. 22.)

May those who have these gifts use them in the order of the judgment seat. O how soon we all may be gathered to Him. Thus, beloved, the work of the Lord was done, and thus the Master desires it to be done. To act on these divine principles may cause the servant of Jesus Christ to tread a lonely and a narrow path, but they may rest assured it is the path of obedience and therefore of trial. God will sustain them in their journey as they walk with Him; and when their hour of tribulation is past, and their wilderness burdens no longer to be borne, they shall receive the reward of their faithful service in company with their glorified Lord—"where the servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads". xx. 3,4. Amen.

DAVID.

NG his sling and his staff, and choosing five
ooth stones from the brook, placing them in
, David drew near to the Philistine, and he
w near to David, preceded by the man who
massive shield.

Philistine looked about to see David, and
e saw him he disdained him, annoyed by
gnificance of his foe, who, as he thought,
n no fair occasion for the display of his
As for David's weapons, he regarded them
uited to chase a dog, and he cursed David by

was God's way, proving that weapons which
carnal, therefore despised by those who are,
ghty through God". By the stroke of a rod,
rs had been divided, and by the same means
d been made to flow from the smitten rock ;
last of rams horns and the shout of triumph,
s of Jericho had fallen ; by the tumbling
ke, the Midianites had judged against them-
nd by the broken pitcher, the blazing torch,
d's war-shout—"the sword of Jehovah and of
—were they discomfited ; and so now the mighty,
champion must fall by a sling and a stone.

r believer, remember in every struggle and
; the battle is the Lord's. The power is His
d the victory from Him, and to His praise.
r Goliath's appearance nor his curse discour-
id ; he saw and heard all by faith, and was
. How different the same circumstances ap-
aith and to unbelief—in the light of nature
at of God. Let us seek, beloved, to be better
the life of faith on the Son of God. The
d youth met Goliath's words, setting the name
ah over against his massive armour, and
Himself as connected with Israel against the
champion Philistines, and said, "Thou comest
ith sword, and with spear, and with shield ;
e to thee in the name of Jehovah of Hosts,
mies thou hast defied". "This day will
deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite
l take thine head from thee, and give the
f the hosts of the Philistines this day unto
of the air and the wild beasts of the field."

vere not great-swelling words of vanity, but
vords of soberness and truth, uttered in faith,

every one of which were made good by the God in
whom David trusted, and made his boast. They were
closely followed by action. He added courage to his
faith, for when the Philistine advanced, David hasted
and ran to meet the Philistine ; he put his hand in his
bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote
the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into
his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. The
giant bit the dust. Jehovah, in whom David trusted
when he slung the stone, guided it to the only fatal
spot (for who shall say there was another part where it
could have entered), and thus far established David's
words of triumphant faith.

But David had gone beyond this. He had told
Goliath that he would take his head from him, whereas
David had no sword. Little did the boastful Philis-
tine think that the deed was to be accomplished with
the sword that hung at his own side. Yet so it was,
for David ran and stood on his body, drew it from its
sheath, and with it cut off his head. Thus with sling
and stone David prevailed over the Philistine, routed
the army, and Israel was more than delivered. They
conquered, and spoiled their foes.

When Saul and David returned from the battle, the
women of Israel came forth to meet them with joy and
instruments of music, singing responsive as they played,
"Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten
thousands".

They could rejoice, and without jealousy ascribe to
the youthful shepherd the pre-eminence ; but for Saul
it was too much—too much for the man from whom
the spirit of God had departed, and in whom selfishness
prevailed. Tenfold honour to David vexed Saul, and
now the storm began to gather which afterwards burst
on David's head.

His first step to honour was a step into trouble ;
Saul eyed David from that day forward. Dear reader,
evermore seek the honour that cometh from God, for
that alone abides ; but remember that the path to
honour is one of sorrow and death to the flesh. Count
the cost, but be not discouraged ; be sober, but not
dismayed.

But it was not all sorrow to David, for he found in
the very son of his envious enemy a friend indeed.
Jonathan, as he listened to David recounting to his
father Jehovah's deliverance, drew to David—his soul
was knit to that of David, he loved him as his own
soul, and they made a covenant before Jehovah.

What this friendship was to David is best learned from David's lamentation at the death of Jonathan—"O, Jonathan, thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women".

Jonathan's path was a difficult one. To be a dutiful son to Saul, his father, who was David's enemy, and yet true to his conviction, a true friend to David, must have been a task indeed. Yet he proved a real friend to David again and again. Ought he to have left his father and consorted with David, sharing his rejection, afterwards to be with him in the kingdom, according to his own words, "Thou shalt be king, and I shall be next unto thee"? This is a question more easily asked than answered I judge; we may one day know.

If not able to determine this point, we can easily discern the loveliness of his conduct, one of the brightest testimonies to unselfishness and lowliness on record in the Old Testament Scriptures. He looked not on his own things only, but also on the things of others, nor failed to sit at the feet of the man of Jehovah's choice. He saw the sovereign hand of God bringing the youthful shepherd across his path, setting him aside from the throne and kingdom, and bowed; this done their union of soul was natural. Unselfishness and lowliness secure unity, and "only by pride cometh contention."

David's appreciation of this friendship and its requital we shall yet trace in the history.

On the morrow, it is written, the evil spirit from Jehovah came upon Saul, and he prophesied, or feigned to do so, and David played as at other times. With murder in his heart, Saul prophesied with his tongue. Judas-like, who by the kiss of friendship would conceal a traitor's mind; or as Joab, who enquired after Amasa's health and took his life.

Beloved reader, remember the capabilities of your evil heart; there is no recorded evil of which it is not capable if left to itself and to Satan, the agitator of that evil. Watch then and pray lest ye enter into temptation. "Saul cast the javelin at David to smite him to the wall, and David avoided out of his presence twice".

This causeless anger in Saul was murder in principle. "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer"; "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment". Saul was under his power, who is and has been from the beginning a liar and a murderer; he was a shadow of him who will

with the dragon's mind have his seat, his power, and great authority, and will make those who resist it suffer.

Saul's hatred was indirectly against Jehovah; it was not David as the *shepherd* he hated, but David as the *chosen of God* for Israel and the kingdom. It was the same principle of rebellion as led him to spare the king of the Amalekites, for which he forfeited the kingdom. Envy, the rottenness of the bones, ate out all his comforts, and made his life a burden, and when the evil spirit came upon him he was more like a demon than a man. His mind was set against the Lord's anointed, and he plotted against his life; but Jehovah had chosen David in grace and wisdom, and was therefore without repentance, a change of mind respecting it David had been anointed at Jehovah's bidding, and must in due time reign. He must wait Jehovah's time for the throne, he must be trained and duly disciplined for the position, and that by trial and sorrow, proving that humility precedes honour; like Moses, who also foreshadowed the Messiah, he must first suffer, then reign, for the substance of all shadows, and the burden of prophesy, was—"The sufferings of the Christ and the glories that should follow". We, dear reader, must also suffer with Him that we may be glorified together.

H. H.

THE WORD OF GOD. . . . SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD.

THERE are two things that God employs in carrying us through the desert, as spoken of in Hebrews v.—one is the word of God, and the other is the priesthood of the Lord Jesus. The word of God is used for the detection and discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Whatsoever is flesh it cuts down mercilessly; and, thank God for it, because it is a hindrance to our blessing. The warning of which the apostle speaks here, alluding to the history of Israel, is, that their carcasses fell in the wilderness. There is, of course, for us the danger answering to that—a very real danger. No doubt God will keep His own to the end, but *there* is the principal danger; and if we are kept it is through faith. Now that which tends to make us fall in the wilderness is the flesh; and the means that God uses that we should not fall in the wilderness, is the word that is sharper than any two-edged sword. Whatever

ught that comes from God, and an intent o God, the word of God judges: that is, springs naturally up in the heart of man, comes from the flesh (which, of course, is n a mere natural man, in the heart, out of the issues of life). The flesh never gets ilderness into the land. It may die in the but it never can get out of it. The flesh it, in a sense, and may die in it, but cannot

There is nothing for the flesh but the igure, of course, of that which judges, de-ondemns it; and let us thank God for that.

Is acceptance with God, we can say the flesh ed already. Thus looked at as a question of ss in the cross of Christ, God has con- in the flesh; and then, when we come to ough the wilderness, the word of God judges: not according to that word. The cross *has* the flesh already; whatever did not suit the hrist in a thought or act was thereby judged nned. The word of God is one means for al carrying out of this; and the second means s the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. f God is the eye of God, judging everything that is not according to Himself. . . .

s in heaven, and my path upon earth is that ngs to, and is consistent with, this place that eaven. My path ought to be the expression What was Christ's path in this world? Even of Man upon earth He was ever "The Son ho is in heaven". Every atom of His life pression of this blessed One in heaven; and h us, so far as we are consistent. The Christ eaven, and who gives me this place in light ence of God, is the Christ that is in me. ostle says, "Always bearing about in the lying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of it be made manifest in our mortal flesh. The Christian upon earth is the manifestation of Jesus, with whom he is in heaven. He is sion of that Christ upon earth. Where we our life is not the expression of that life in re comes the word of God, which is the of it, and searches us, and thus there is on by the truth. The word brings Christ to I am not shewing forth Christ, and judges it. called upon to have our senses exercised, to th good and evil, and that is impossible, ex-

cept as we are walking in reality with God. But the place where Christ keeps our hearts is the holiest of all. He has sanctified Himself in the presence of God for us, and that is the place where he keeps us. We may forget Him, we may fail in appreciating the position in which He has set us, and in walking according to it; but in the holiest he keeps us in unmingled, untiring enjoyment of what is there—there in perfect love, and in the light as God is in the light, sin put away, and ourselves made the righteousness of God in Him. . . . The place into which I am introduced is the unclouded favour of God. And now here on this earth I am to manifest Christ. But in the midst of all the trials and difficulties of the way, we find these two means which God uses to carry us on: the word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, which judges everything that is contrary to God; and the intercession of Christ, which meets all our weakness and failure. He has trodden the same path which we have to tread, and has met the same temptations in that path. And now our very weakness, if we are kept in dependence upon Christ, is but the continual exercise of affection to Christ, and the drawing out of His affections towards us.

"IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON."

DR. CHALMERS, on one occasion, spent an evening with a number of pious friends and a former parishioner, who was seventy-two years of age, and apparently in perfectly good health, though alas! as yet without hope in Christ. During the evening the conversation took a devout turn, and was continued till a late hour. The old man listened, and seemed attentive. Dr Chalmers observed this, and felt inclined to speak to him personally about his eternal interest, but thought it would hardly be proper before the company. The next morning a noise was heard in the old man's room. Dr. Chalmers ran in just in time to see him die. It was a solemn scene; and no sooner was it certain that life was extinct than he called the whole household together, and kneeling down, offered a most affecting prayer, and gave a solemn exhortation. But he was greatly distressed the whole day, a large part of which was spent with a friend in the woods. "It was touching," said that friend, "to see him sit down on the bank, frequently with tears in his eyes, and say, 'Oh, God has rebuked me. I know now what St. Paul means by being *instant in season and out of season*. Had I addressed that old man last night with urgency, I might have seemed "out of season" to human eye, but how *seasonable* it would have been!"

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"ONLY IN THE LORD."

1 COR. VII. 29.

THE doctrine that it is impossible to know who are children of God, and who are not, and that we are not at liberty to form a judgment on the subject, practically obliterates such a passage as this from the age of Scripture.

When the children of Israel were about to enter the land of Promise, they were warned very specially against forming alliances, or making marriages with the idolatrous nations of the land. The reason given is "for they will turn away thy son from following me". (See Gen. xii. 1-4.) It is sad, but unquestionably true, that such is the necessary effect of "evil communications". So it was before the flood as recorded in Gen. vi. ; so again in the wilderness (Num. xxv. 1-3), and, not to multiply instances, of Solomon it is written "Even many did outlandish women cause to sin." (Neh. xiii. 26.)

Among the remnant of Israel that returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonish captivity—many fell to this snare, as it is written "We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land." (Ezra x. 2.) They repented, however, of this sin, having heard and trembled at the Word of the Lord, and the immediate fruit of their repentance was the putting away of the strange wives, and not only of them, but also of the children born of them, whose speech betrayed that they were not true Israelites. (See Neh. xiii. 24.)

Amongst the believers at Corinth the question identically had arisen, what is to be done in the case of husband or wife being converted to God, whilst the

other remains unsaved? Are they to separate, or are they to remain together? The answer is plain. The believing one was *not* to seek separation, but rather the salvation of the other. The burden of separating, if it should take place was to remain entirely upon the unsaved one.

Then arose the question of the children, was it lawful to retain and acknowledge them? or should they be dealt with as in the days of Ezra? To set at rest all scruples upon this point the Apostle authoritatively declares that both the unbelieving husband or wife, and the children born of them are *relatively* sanctified. That is, they are by the Word of God set apart for the believing one, so that it is no sin, but on the contrary the responsibility of the believer to dwell with them, and seek their blessing.*

In the event of separation being desired by the unbelieving one, the wish was to be granted, but in that case, the believer was to remain *unmarried*—blessed earnest of the gracious purpose of God to grant in His own time, in answer to prayer and godliness, the salvation of the other.

The explicit instructions thus given in detail as to those married persons who might be converted is of itself evidence, even if there were no command, that the voluntary union in marriage of a believer with an unbeliever is not even contemplated in Scripture.

* This passage has been lamentably perverted from its obvious meaning in order to favour the human device of "infant baptism". But if the passage warrants the baptism of the unregenerate children, why not also of the unregenerate husband, seeing he also is thus relatively "sanctified". A similar use of the word sanctified is seen, as to food in 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

Moreover, there is the express command, "Only in the Lord," and again, "Be not unequally yoked together, believers with unbelievers".

Strange indeed it is, that in the face of so plain a command the children of God should not unfrequently be found marrying those who are unsaved.

Long prior to such a step, there cannot but have been departure in heart from the Lord. The conversation and intercourse that led to such a result could only have been of the carnal mind—"of the earth, earthly". Had heavenly things been the theme, no response would have been found in the heart of the worldling. Had Christ been the subject of conversation, would not the unsaved one have been dumb? Had faithful testimony been borne, the natural pride and enmity of the heart would soon have been manifested. Had the light been shining, it would soon have been found that the darkness had no communion with it.

The motives that led the Christian to such a step, however plausible, could only have been of the flesh. Some have even had the folly to say that "the Lord led them" in such a step, as if the Lord ever led in a path contrary to His own commands. Circumstances may indeed have been favourable—Satan will not fail to smooth the path to sin; but to be led by circumstances apart from the Word of God is to be certainly led wrong. God has given one infallible standard whereby to test every suggestion, whether of our own hearts or from others, and that is His written Word.

To be yoked with an unbeliever in this closest of all earthly ties, seen in the light of God's presence, can only be regarded as a terrible calamity.

It would be difficult indeed to conceive of the spiritually enlightened eye being so fearfully deluded as to perceive any attractiveness in such a union, were it not that again and again the melancholy spectacle has been witnessed.

But little did such imagine the bitterness that would result. Often has it been experienced. The living yoked to the dead. The home that should have been filled with peace and gladness, darkened with discord and evil passions—a kind of living sepulchre.

The hearts that should have been fused into one, to be an altar of unhindered prayer and praise, alienated, if not at utter enmity, upon all that is dearest and best to the child of God.

The children that should have been a godly seed,

brought up under the united vigilance of both parents in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, learning to side with the ungodly against the helpless Christian parent.

Every step of faith and separation to God disputed, opposed, forbidden, until the crushed and downtrodden child of God succumbs to the pressure, and ceases even to be known as a believer.

Perhaps some reader may regard the picture as too darkly drawn. Satan may whisper, "It won't be so bad as that"; or, again, "Who knows but he may be converted?" Thus with plausible deceits will Satan seek to beguile the unwary. But the Word of God has declared, "The way of transgressors is hard"; "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways"; and many a broken-hearted witness could bear testimony to the truth of these Scriptures, and how fearfully they apply to the child of God who dares to marry an unbeliever.

J. R. C.

THE VINE TREE.

JOHN XV. 1-16.

THIS parable was given by our Lord with the one great object of teaching His disciples about fruit-bearing. To illustrate this truth, He takes up the most fruitful of plants—the vine—a cluster of whose grapes was borne from the land of promise to prove to Israel the fruitfulness of the land that the Lord was bringing them into. The Lord also seems to use the vine to illustrate the other side of the truth, because, though it is so rich in its fruitfulness, yet apart from this, it is the most valueless of plants, the wood is so useless, as it says in Ezek. xv. 3, 4, that it is not "meet for any work," no man would make a "pin of it to hang any vessel thereon"—it is only good for the fire. Its value in fruit-bearing, its worthlessness when it does not bear fruit, are both brought out in this chapter to teach two great lessons to us. That this passage is addressed to Christians, and only to Christians, seems plain from the words "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you" (verse 3). Also we know that the eleven disciples were alone with the Lord at this time, Judas having already gone out. But though addressed to Christians, we must not confuse this simile of the vine and the branches, with that of the body of which Christ is the

Head. It is not here a question of life, of union with Christ, of relationship, position, or anything of that sort (these truths are all taught us by various other figures), but simply of bearing fruit. The source from whence it comes, the power for so doing, are all taught us here—six times our Lord speaks of bearing fruit, and seven or eight times He speaks of *abiding* in Him as the means of so doing. It is not Christ as our life we get here, but Christ as the source of our strength; that which flows from the vine into the branches is not life but power, power from Christ to serve Him. The branch “cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine,” from thence it draws the sap that makes it fruitful. “Severed from me ye *can do* nothing” (verse 5). It does not say you can have no life, as it would in the symbol of the body, but you can bear no fruit, you can *do* nothing. (Contrast Phil. iv. 15.) It is impossible for a Christian to lose his place as a member of the body of Christ, that is a vital union that nothing can change; but it is quite possible to lose your place as a branch of the vine, for our Lord says, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away” (verse 2). “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth” (verse 6). If we are not abiding and so bearing fruit we wither, and then the sapless branches are broken off from the vine. We do not lose our salvation, nor are we always cut off in the flesh, but we lose our place as servants of Christ, we are “disapproved,” as St. Paul says in 1 Cor. ix. 27, “Lest . . . I myself should be a castaway,” literally “disapproved”; and he exhorts Timothy to “study and show thyself approved unto God”. (2 Tim. ii. 15.) The disapproved servant and the branches cast out of the vine seem to be identical. The end of verse 6, “Men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned,” is part of the simile, not of the interpretation, and comes in parenthetically. The point in the simile is their *uselessness*, the natural branches are not burnt in judgment, but because they are utterly worthless they are cast into the fire and are burned, and as worthless as these withered branches are, severed from their vine, *so useless for any service is a Christian who is not abiding in Christ*.

The simile of the vine is carried on from the Old Testament. Israel was then God's vine on the earth to bear fruit to His name. But Israel failed; when God looked for grapes, He found nothing but wild grapes. (Is. v. 2.) He had planted “a noble vine,”

but they “turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine” (Jer. ii. 21), and the end of it is, it is burned with fire, it is cut down. (Ps. lxxx. 14, 15, 16.) But though Israel had failed, God still wanted fruit upon earth, and Christ came, the “true vine,” the branches of which were to bear fruit to God. In this vine there is to be nothing but fruitfulness, every withered branch is to be cut off, and even the branches that are bearing fruit are to be purged that they may “bring forth more fruit”. For “herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” (verse 8). E. A. C.

“BUT he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.”
“And they stoned Stephen calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts vii. 55, 56 and 59, 60.)

So “stedfastly” may I too look,
And see Thy glory shine,
And so transfigur'd, show Thy power
In this poor heart of mine.

Gone are the clouds of guilt and fear
Which hid Thee from my sight,
And now the open'd heavens reveal
Thy pure transforming light.

Thus gazing up, may earth no more
Divert my raptur'd eye;
But Thy unsullied radiance, Lord,
Attract me perfectly!

M. W.

“It is strange that we, who have such continual use of God, and His bounties and mercies, and are so perpetually beholden to Him, should after all be so little acquainted with Him. And from hence it comes that we are so loth to think of our dissolution and of our going to God. For, naturally, where we are not acquainted, we like not to hazard our welcome. We would rather spend our money at an inn, than turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host; whereas to an entire friend, whom we elsewhere have familiarly conversed with, we go as boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such an one. I will not live upon God and His daily bounties, without His acquaintance. By His grace I will not let one day pass without renewing my acquaintance with Him, giving Him some testimony of my love to Him, and getting from Him some sweet pledge of His constant favour towards me.”

THE HISTORY OF MAN.

WHEN human history is written, it is usually by those who understand nothing of the things of the Spirit of God, and who admire much in their fellow men which is, in truth, abomination in the sight of God. They dress up a sort of stage on which they exhibit with all the arts of word-painting, their favourite figures, and these they decorate with all which can fix the wondering gaze of such as "have pleasure in unrighteousness". Scenes of startling interest are painted to the mind, and the imagination is inflamed by descriptions of earthly pomp and glory.

Very commonly the information on which these writers rely, is imperfect, and rests on very doubtful authority, and their own preconceived theories lead them to increase the confusion, by the addition of some fresh false colouring, or it may be, some newly invented fictions. Thus history becomes the battleground of sects and parties, and false impressions are received and transmitted from generation to generation, both of characters and events. A clever statesman of the last century ridiculed the whole great drama in which he had acted a leading part, and said, "I have been behind the scenes, and have seen the coarse pullies which move the gaudy machine". But the Christian has no need of this experience. He can pierce through the whole mass of delusion, and discern in the light of God's Word the vanity and emptiness of the whole scene. The lesson he learns is not that man is wise or great, but that God's Word is true, and that indeed "they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good no not one . . . destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes".

If Satan had not blinded the minds of men, the history of the world would be regarded as one long catalogue of sins, and the knowledge of it would lead only to sorrow and to shame. From the day when Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and built himself a city, there has been a prolonged unbroken history of selfishness and crime. The fruit of his attempts to convert the earth on which the curse had fallen into a happy dwelling place, and the fruit of all the skilful inventions of his sons, was that "the earth was filled with violence," and God in righteous judg-

ment swept its millions of busy men away. The next experience of man's wisdom was no better. Nimrod, the mighty hunter, founded an empire which rested on slavery and oppression, and which covered idolatry with all the glitter and the glare of imperial patronage and power. He was deified and worshipped by successive generations, who, when they did not stoop to worship four-footed beasts, and creeping things, and birds of the air, continually added to their Pantheon fresh blood stained demons, and were incited by the example of their deities, to a constant course of cruelty and injustice, hateful, and hating one another.

We may perhaps have been accustomed in early life, or at school, to read of battles and of wars, and may have admired the famous heroes and sages who have swayed mankind; and so, unconsciously, we may have become callous to their crimes. But let us for a moment be delivered from the spell of these early dreams, and we shall wonder how we could possibly ever have read with interest, or without abhorrence, the foul dark record of wickedness which constitutes almost the entire book of man's sad history. The female sex degraded, slavery imposed without remorse, false religion propagated by the sword, and upheld by the frauds of a cruel priesthood, power in the hands of the basest of men, regions devastated by relentless war, millions perishing in battle, ambition cloaking itself in every variety of disguise, saints crushed, if not exterminated—such is the true tale which tells man's universal history. Mingled with such main features of this scroll of mourning, lamentation and woe, are endless details of treachery, massacres, tortures, intrigues, rapine, and folly, over which the pen of the historian glides with as much ease, as if it were used to depict the employments of an unfallen race.

Then if we turn to those which are deemed the brightest pages of the story, we see that which is called patriotism inflaming some of the fiercest passions of the human mind; and the history of "the Church" resolving itself into a miserable record of heresies and persecutions, in which it is difficult to trace even the vestiges of the faith once delivered to the saints, or the life of faith in the Son of God. The grand idol of success has been adored by every succeeding generation, and the epithet of "great" has been accorded by common consent to every tyrant who has excelled others in the extent of his conquests, or by the force of his influence over the foolish hearts of men. The Christian can

estimate all this aright, but if there be some magnificent buildings to perpetuate the memory of a name, or some other tokens of superior genius or power, the common imagination is captivated at once, and like the multitude who cried out "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," mankind at large are content to applaud the images which historians and poets have adorned, and presented for their wonder and admiration.

The Word of God passes by in complete silence the endless legends of earthly glory, and tells nothing but that which bears on the interests and history of the chosen seed. The king may see a grand image with a head of gold, and watch it till a stone cut out without hands smites it on the feet, and its dust becomes like that of the summer threshing floor. But God's servant sees the same vision in another form, and beholds four wild beasts, ravaging and destroying till their end comes. It is not denied by prophetic students who profess to see the fulfilment of prophecy in history, that we have in the Revelation the later history of the last Beast. And yet, strange to say, they think that they see the Church of Christ, from the days of Constantine downwards, in association with this Beast, dependent on him, and gratefully sharing his earthly dominion! We may entirely concur with them in thinking that these are the latter days of his appointed time, even if we do not reach the conclusion by their calculation of years, and their conjectures that six vials have already been poured out. With this concurrence of opinion, we ought to be all alike awake to the true character and prospects of the times in which we live. Where the warrant can be found for the world's complacent cry of peace and safety, it is difficult to say. May we not rather judge that another stage of man's apostacy is hastening on, and that the termination of the present reign of self exaltation and pride, will be the fool's thought that there is no God, and that then will come the strong delusion to believe "the lie"—that man is himself God, and that he is to be worshipped?

The past history of man has been the history of force and cruelty, crushing ignorance and weakness, but now man is asserting himself, and the fretful spirit of democracy is paving the way for attempts by man to govern himself, and for the sure inevitable result of utter and bitter failure, leading on to a willing submission to some one great mind, which shall impose order, and make his own sole will supreme. And this

must be the end of man's history in this present age. So long as we fail to distinguish the dispensations of God, and rightly to divide the word of truth, we may remain blind to the essential principles which should guide our judgment respecting things present, and things to come. But when we see "this present evil world" in the light of the Scripture, and are liberated from it in the spirit of our mind, we can calmly examine the past in the light which exhibits God's view of it; we can discern our proper place of separation from the course of this world, and we can foresee the awful crisis of which the dark shadow is already falling on the earth; and touched by the solemnity of the approaching scene, we shall be urgent to warn the deluded multitude to flee from the wrath to come. We are left here as witnesses to bear a faithful testimony, and to attract, if it be possible, the deluded worshippers of Mammon, and the slaves of the world's pleasures to the true light, and to the only joy and hope of man. May the Lord give us mercy to be faithful—as not entangled with the affairs of this life, and as separated in heart from the allurements of the god of this world! "and that knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as *in the day*"—in the power of a faith which realizes all our responsibility, and acts as if even now we were before the judgment seat of Christ. By conformity to the world we may mislead and delude our fellow saints, and utterly ruin their testimony and our own. Too long have the Lord's people lived under the influence of traditions which have perverted their judgments; too long have they walked in the bewildering twilight of the world's false glory. Let them learn to read man's history aright, and they will learn their own true relation to all that the world can display or promise, and while many are running to and fro, and planning new Babels to reach to heaven, they will dwell apart fed by hopes which both satisfy and elevate the heart.

In no country in the world is it more necessary than in Scotland that these principles should be remembered. A halo and glitter of romance has been thrown over several periods of her history, and a most subtle but powerful influence has been exerted on the minds of the people. The early struggles of the nation for inde-

pendence, with all the attendant cruelties of barbarous warfare; the strange attempts of nobles and ministers in Edinburgh to bind the kingdom for ever by a Covenant to establish a Presbytery and extirpate Prelacy; the sufferings of sincere men who were prepared to fight for the Covenant, and if they had power to enforce it by the arm of secular power: and then the attempts to restore a Popish king; have all been celebrated with an enthusiasm, which has kindled a flame of national illusion, so that when the axe is laid to the root of the tree, and we begin to test all things by the Word, and to distinguish that which is the fruit of the flesh in its pride and excitement, from the fruit of the Spirit, we find an almost invincible barrier in the prejudices of the people. It is no wonder, with such national traditions as prevail in Scotland, that there is a readiness to sing with triumph the language of Psalms which speak of binding kings with chains, and nobles with fetters of iron, and of a universal reign of righteousness and peace. If the scales are taken from the eyes, and we see that "all that is not of the Father is of the world," we shall detect in the dreams of poetical fancy, the very hand which presented to our Lord all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them, while it hid all their misery and shame.

Precisely so it will be as to passing events, when we are tempted to dwell on them, and to admire the inflated boasts of orators and newspapers, and when pictures of human progress and coming peace and prosperity are exhibited to our view. A touch of truth dissolves the whole flattering scene, and sin and death are beheld reigning over all, and over everything of the world. God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts, nor are God's ways as man's ways. Man's wisdom is foolishness with Him who sees the end from the beginning. He has one grand divine purpose, which amidst all the vain workings of human pride, He is steadfastly carrying out, and the issue of it will, as a great writer once said, "put the seal of a solemn and impressive mockery" on all man's most cherished schemes.

M. W.

"TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH."

THE Lord's love is not a careless love. We have all, more or less, lost sight of the judgment exercised by the Lord in "His own house;" and it is too frequently supposed that because the salvation of the saint is a sure thing, God is indifferent about character

here. But to love, this is impossible. This is for our comfort and blessing—there is wonderful comfort in seeing it to be the spring of all God's dealings with us; but at the same time it is intended to act strongly on our conscience in the way of warning. . . .

Although it is quite certain that Satan shall be bruised under our feet "shortly," yet the certainty of Christ's final victory with the Church should not lessen our sense of the power of the enemy in the meantime. This is so great as to make constant watchfulness necessary, for without it we shall be giving him a direct handle against ourselves. The flesh by which Satan works is still present, and it needs to be "mortified". Habitual faithfulness in judging the flesh in little things is the secret of not falling.

In Rev. ii. the overcoming spoken of is not so much the overcoming of the world, and that which is without, as of all the evil discovered to be within. The Lord takes notice of the least failure, and we always find that in judging, God goes back to the original sin: we have not only to see where the failure is manifested, but when it was we first went away from the Lord, and we shall very generally find it to have been in getting out of communion, this leaving of the "first love". This should not be, and it is not necessary; but even when it is the case, the grace of the Lord will still be found greater than all the evil that is discovered to be within. . . .

We never shall have right thoughts about our privileges and blessings until we see our union with the Lord Jesus in everything. The way to judge of ourselves is to look directly at Him. The thing that gives the true character to our hopes is living union (not a mystical union, though there is truth in this, for we have been crucified with Christ, &c.) with the Lord Jesus. We thus come in hope and practice into identity of circumstances with Him. Being united to Him, everything that belongs to Him belongs to us, as it is said, "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ". All our conduct should flow from this. Whatever glorifies the Lord Jesus becomes us. This is the proper measure of our conduct, whatever does not savour of it is wrong conduct in a Christian. We are united to One who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," and we therefore are so too. Most sublime truth! Yet how simple and practical! When realised it must tell in every way and detail of life. How could one made

higher than the heavens be seeking earthly things? How, for instance, could he desire riches?

But in acting thus, we must remember there is much of difficulty. We have Satan always to resist us. We have to overcome him in a variety of circumstances and trials; not only to contend with, but to overcome, and this, too, with a flesh, that, if not mortified, will always be ready to lend a hand to him.

This keeping the flesh mortified is the great thing, the secret of all strength in practical difficulties; and nothing will do it but living in communion and friendship with the Lord. We must watch against its first strivings and desires, or, before we are aware, it will be giving a handle to the temptations of Satan. If we are "holding fast" the name of Christ we shall gain the victory over Satan, he will lose his power; and then all is joy; even suffering (for we shall suffer in consequence of our union with Christ for His name's sake), all will be joy. But if there is not the every-day common-place diligence to break the power of every-day difficulties and keep down every-day evil, we shall have to contend with the flesh instead of Satan (with whom our conflict ought to be), while it will give him power to come in when we are not ready to meet him; we shall have to get the armour in order at the time the fight should begin.

I pray you take heed, for if we fail in this daily judging and keeping down the flesh we lose the power of victory over Satan; in conflict he will gain the advantage over us, or, at least, we shall only stand our ground, instead of gaining ground on him and triumphing in victory over him. If it be so we are unfaithful to Christ; we owe it to Him to gain ground upon the world where Satan reigns—to stand in such a position as to be able to go forward.

In the name of the Lord's love to you, and because of the privileges that are yours, judge yourselves and see whether you are ready for the battle, or whether Satan would not find in you the flesh—so alive—which would serve as a handle he might use. Remember, whilst judging yourselves your souls are to rest on the joy of Christ's perfect righteousness, though to have overcome will add to our joy in the day of Christ's appearing, and bring more glory to Him now.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

Rom. ix. 4.

THIS "giving of the Law" is enumerated by the apostle among those indefeasible privileges of Israel which the faithfulness of God has secured to them. They, indeed, had failed in maintaining this, as well as every other privilege, because God would show in them that the flesh could keep nothing. But their failure has by no means invalidated the faithfulness of God; and when the veil is taken from off their hearts, and they are brought under the blessed ministry of the New Covenant, then God himself, of His own abounding grace, will make good to them every privilege which they, undertaking to maintain in their own strength, have lost.

A single glance at the passage must at once convince us that "the giving of the Law" cannot possibly mean the ministry of death and condemnation under which they were brought at Mount Sinai. That was, properly speaking, their receiving the Law; as it is said, "who have received the Law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it". It is true, that when the heart of Israel turns to the Lord, and they know forgiveness of sins through the Blood of Jesus, then the Lord will write his Law on their hearts and put it in their minds. But this, again, is not "the giving of the Law";—belonging to them in the same sense as the Adoption and the Promises belong to them. It is clear, therefore that a privilege given of God's grace to Israel, and to be enjoyed by them is here intended. The word only occurs in this place in the New Testament, and can only properly be translated "Legislation," or "Lawgiving"; as it is in the Rhemish version, which follows the Vulgate, *Legislatio*. We find the kindred word in James iv. 12, *Nomothetes*,—There is one *Law-giver*. It is then among Israel's prerogative blessings, to stand in relation to other nations as the only nation which ever had its *Legislation* directly from God himself; and thereby becomes the great pattern of Legislation to other nations. This is what the apostle asserts.

It pleased God once to own a Nation separated from all other nations as his own. Nationalism, as to Israel was divine. The highest encomium which an Israelite could pass on a Gentile was "he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue". Religion and politics were so intimately blended, that the chiefest patriot,

were the most godly persons ;—as Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

This was necessarily the case, since it had pleased God to become the Lawgiver of a nation. The civil, judicial, municipal, and social laws of Israel, were directly from God. "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads,"—"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head," had the same sanction as "Thou shalt not swear by my name falsely". "I AM THE LORD," was the sanction of the one as well as of the other. (see Lev. xix.) The most minute directions were given for the sale of land and of houses. (Lev. xxv.) God stood in the relation of the Landlord to Israel—"The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine". There were no free holders in Israel; all the land as we should say, was leasehold; so that it became impossible for the land long to accumulate in few hands. (Lev. xxv.)

One great principle pervaded God's Legislation for Israel, and that was, that every thing should be immediately linked with himself. God is the only wise God; and this is shown now to the principalities and powers in heavenly places by the church, as it will be hereafter to the world by Israel as a nation. This was Israel's responsibility,—to show that the nation ordered of God was the only wise and blessed nation. "Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your *wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations*, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a *wise and understanding people*. For what nation is there so great, who have God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" (Deut. iv. 6—8). But Israel faileth to exhibit this; and lost their distinguishing privilege by desiring to be governed as the nations round about them. They soon found the difference between the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and the arbitrary enactments of the king they had chosen. (1 Sam. viii. 10—17.) None said of them, "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour of thy people: O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of *thy nation*." (Ps. cvi. 4, 5.) Even in the days of

Solomon it was the splendour of the court and wisdom of the sovereign, rather than the happiness of the nation, which drew forth the words "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand before thee continually, and that hear thy wisdom". For Solomon grievously pressed the people for his own personal splendour. (1 Kings xii. 4) Israel has again rejected God as its king in rejecting Jesus, and saying, "we have no king but Cæsar". The kingdom of God is taken from that generation to be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And never, until God's King is set on his holy hill of Zion, and God's nation established under Him, will the blessed fruits of the kingdom of God, in righteous Government in the earth, be made manifest. The Government shall be on his shoulder *manifestly*, as we know it by faith already to be. In him will be found the greater than Solomon; and yet the true Solomon,—the Prince of Peace; "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to *order it and establish it with judgment and with justice*, from henceforth even for ever". The blessedness of the nation will flow immediately from the person of its King. He will not need any oppression to add to his royal state, for "He shall bear the glory". He brings the riches to the nation and receives them not from it: "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron. I will also make thy *officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness*." "A king shall reign in righteousness"; and "God shall give the King his judgments, and righteousness to the King's Son; and he shall judge the people with righteousness and the poor with judgment. In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." Israel will then be manifested as Jeshurun—the righteous nation; as it has been manifested as "the sinful nation". Its metropolis will be the city of Righteousness, the faithful city. And then Israel shall say to the nations round about them, "the glorious Lord is unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby. For the Lord is *our Judge*, the Lord is *our Lawgiver*, the Lord is *our King*; he will save us." (Is. xxxiii. 21, 22.)

Israel, thus ordered under her once rejected but now acknowledged King, will be the pattern nation to all nations round about it. It will not only stand as

kingdom of Priests, from whence alone the true knowledge of God is to be learnt (for it is an irreversible principle that "Salvation is of the Jews"); but its present blessed order shall be so manifest, that it must be said "happy are the people that are in such a case, *yea*, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God". And when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, all nations shall flow into it, and many people shall go and say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth *the Law*, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their words into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Is. ii. 1, 2, 3.) The laws by which the nations will be governed for their blessing will be the laws of God. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth; there shall be one Lord and his name one." Jerusalem will be "the city of the great King". And he will say, "Judah is my Law-giver". Law-giving and Salvation are alike of the Jews. The history of Joseph may show how Israel may furnish Legislation to the nations. "The king (Pharaoh) loosed him, even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance, to bind his princes at his pleasure, and to teach his senators wisdom." (Ps. cv. 20-22; Gen. xlvii. 13-26.)

While Israel continued to be the one nation of which God was Law-giver and King, *power* and *truth* were united; but at the era of the Babylonish captivity the religious and civil elements were separated: *power* passed into the hands of the Gentiles, and *truth* remained with Israel. In the Lord Jesus Christ we see these again united; "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"; He is the Truth; and Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. But as He was not born, things remained as they had previously been. The Jews said, "it is not lawful for us to put any man to death," plainly showing their political power was gone". And the Lord said, "salvation is of the Jews;" as plainly declaring, though they knew it not, that truth remained with them.

When power was separated from truth, by passing

into the hands of the Gentiles, the Legislation of God did not pass with it. God gave power to Nebuchadnezzar, but made no *Laws* for him or for his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar, was his own Law-giver; even as it is said of the Gentiles, "their judgment and their dignity shall *proceed of themselves*." (Hab. i. 7.) Very varied have been the forms of their government, and multiplied their laws. There has never been a fixed principle of legislation. At one time the caprice of the monarch, at another the interests of a class, or again popular feeling, have given the tone to legislation. Human interests and human passions have worked together, or thwarted each other in attempting to meet evil or advance good by legislation. It is in the ceaseless course of Gentile legislation that we find the word of the Prophet realised;—"Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts, that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 13, 14.) This will not be effected by the wisdom of the Gentile, but by the wisdom and power of God, after the former have had the freest scope to try what human wisdom could effect. What a simple principle, and yet how comprehensive, was that of Israel's legislation. "I AM THE LORD." "There is one Law-giver"; and His wisdom is the guarantee for the goodness of the laws. Israel will yet say, with respect to the Gentiles, "we are Thine; Thou never barest rule over them, they were not called by Thy name." (Isa. lx. 19.) And as we know that "Salvation is of the Jews," so is it yet to be made manifest that Legislation for the well being, even of nations on the earth, is of them also. Of Jerusalem, the city of the Great King, it is said, "the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Is. lx. 12). Then shall the nations seek unto them for statutes and judgments, such as alone can secure national happiness.

As things actually are, the church has no *legislative power*. Its laws are already ordered and settled, either immediately by its Head, on whose shoulders its government rests, or by those to whom he gave the power of legislation,—the apostles. "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Pet. iii. 2.) The church is built upon the *foundation* of the Apostles and prophets. To legislate now would be to undermine the foundation.

The church has large *executive* power—"Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 23.) It may, indeed, deliberate as to the application of Christ's laws to a given case; but it cannot make a law to meet a particular case. The presence of the Holy Ghost in the church, acting through living persons, is the provision of the Lord for a right application of his own laws.

The church has *judicial* power,—“Why do ye not judge them that are within?” But it only is put in the place of a tribunal of appeal in the case of private wrong between two individuals; and this after two antecedent steps. 1st, private remonstrance, 2nd remonstrance in the presence of one or two witnesses; if the individual refuses to bow to them, then the church is to be appealed to. It may lay the matter before the Lord, and pray for the delinquent; but if this fails, the person must be treated as a heathen man, and a publican.

Israel is not now governed by God as a nation. It does not now politically exist, and is therefore incapable of being judged by its own laws; or of answering the end of shewing forth that God's own laws for a nation are the only wise and good laws.

The Gentiles are actively engaged in legislating for themselves; and it is to be remarked, that of late years they have legislated for the so-called Church.

The question, therefore, is one of very solemn importance, as one of truth,—can a saint be in a right position as a Legislator?

All are agreed, the world as well as the church, that it is impossible to apply Christ's code (Matt. v.-vii.) to the ordering of the world. It will hardly be questioned that the fountain of Legislation in Christendom is not the holiness of God, and that God's civil code to Israel would not apply to the institutions of the nations of Christendom. Grace does not, cannot, and was not intended to order the world; yet that is the blessed reign under which the saints are brought; “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord”. And the saint is responsible for manifesting grace before men. But what is the result? “Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.” (Is. xxvi. 10.) This it is which perplexes the mind of the saint. He sees men

despising the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, and iniquity abounding in consequence. He sees much, very much wrong, which he thinks might be remedied by better legislation. He is made to stand much in the place of Habakkuk the arguing prophet: “Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievances? Therefore the law is slackened, judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.” (Hab. i. 3, 4.) All that the prophet was made to see was the progress of iniquity, and that there was no remedy till the vision came. And in the midst of every thing, to remedy which we might be tempted to use our political influence, the word is “*the just shall live by faith*”. “Ye have need of patience; for yet a little while, and he that shall come will come and will not tarry.” Our place is still to suffer on, to endure unto the end; not to try to remedy the evil, in our own way, but to hold fast our confession until the appearing of Jesus. God's remedy for the evil is, “a King shall reign is righteousness”. Every thing is now settling into its own principles. May the Saint have grace to assert his “Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” in the midst of trial and suffering here; but glory in the prospect—“If so be we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

Is not a Christian, therefore, out of his place, when acting as a Legislator? Out of his place of confession unto Christ,—as well as to the hope of glory at the appearing of Christ?

J. L. H.

“I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.”

IT is Christ the Lord who speaks to us, and says, as He said to His disciples so long ago, “I am with you always”. Doubtless, it was not spoken for them alone, but for our sakes also.

As He spoke, His disciples were standing around Him, and it might have seemed strange to them, and hard to believe it, when He was received up out of their sight; but do you think they doubted? I fancy they must have known Jesus too well by that time to distrust or doubt Him again; indeed, we know they did not, for the first thing they did, when they no longer

th their outward eyes, was to worship Him, worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem by”.

Could it be so, when they had just Lord and Master taken right away from them more would they see Him on earth, till come with clouds and great glory, to fetch Church home, and yet they were full of

that they knew even then what it meant “faith,” and “to live by faith”. His word; they trusted it, and acted on it.

could have confidently affirmed that he seen Jesus depart; even the angels had led them so; and though He would return could make up to them for all the time He Just this: “I am with you alway”. They live them, and when He was quite out of began to talk to Him just as they had done od beside them but a few minutes before. f great joy in the realization of this simple us union, they returned to Jerusalem—to an on Him, live with Him, as much as n more, for the Holy Ghost should also bide with them, not, as it has been so put, “to supply His place when absent, Him present in a nearer and more blessed

se Jesus never left them, and that was why n “great joy”. Jesus never leaves any ot one. Then how is it that every Chris-likewise full of great joy? Because they eve, or only partially believe what the ritten. They begin to look for external ‘If Jesus were with me, I could not m. I could not be doubting, dark, to temptation, ashamed of acknow- serving my Saviour. I should be full , peace, good works; all this is far from dare I say He is with me, when my life y it?” Yes, it may be so, and yet all you or think, can never alter this one fact; h you. Wherever you are—if you have lf to Him, and He has washed you in His orgiven your sins; if you are one of these, one of those to whom He says, “I am ray”.

any that, it is like denying God’s word.

Rest assured it is true; but look elsewhere for the trouble.

Here is a lovely spring day. “The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land.” You go to the back parts of some large town, where the houses stand high and close together, and in one of the cellars you speak to the man who calls it home, of all these lovely things. Your heart is full of them, but you meet with no response; he hardly knows even what you mean. Why? He is not *living* in them.

And perhaps this is why you think little of this word of the Lord’s; you are not living in it. You know nothing of it experimentally, and you will not, you cannot, until you first receive it. *Take it*. Never mind if the hand you hold out for it be very weak, if it be but a poor crippled thing. It was a sad sight, the withered hand of the man in the Capernaum synagogue; but what a blessed sight when he stretched it out to Jesus, and found it strong and whole!

We do not read that the man begged Jesus to restore his hand; but that Jesus noticed it, and in his love and pity bade him stretch it forth, and made it whole. So Jesus looks at those who are His—those who feel a want in their lives, and long to satisfy it, and He bids you stretch forth your hand, and take Himself as your portion.

I suppose all Christians believe this promise in the abstract, but the Lord Jesus wants us each separately to make it a personal thing between ourself and Himself. I think we sometimes make two mistakes. We hear the voice of Jesus saying, “I am with you alway,” and by faith we receive this promise, but we do not use it, and so it appears to slip away again; or perhaps in a weary sort of way we begin the living, and leave the accepting. What we want is *both* of these. First, to receive it on trust—by faith—by believing. How can we do this? Until we have done it we have little idea of what it means, but I think this expresses it—the utter surrendering of ourselves to God, being content to give ourselves wholly up to Him. Until we do this, there is always a sort of strife between us and God, not acknowledged even to ourselves, and perhaps hardly known of; but it is so, for *two* are reigning, and it is only when *all things—all things* are put under Christ’s rule that there is and can be peace. I recollect once hearing that in plants and flowers there is a principal

root called the tap-root, which, if cut, kills the plant. Is there some such root that keeps one of us from receiving Christ fully—some root that binds us, and keeps us from dying to the world, and living to Christ? Can you not trust *God* with it? Give it and yourself to Him; do not let it separate you from a close and blessed union with your Saviour who *died* for you.

There is no following Him fully without giving up of one kind or another; and lest we should lose worldly goods, are we willing to lack spiritual ones? Lest we should lose our earthly friends, do we treat the Friend to whom we owe our life, our all, as a mere acquaintance? Lest we should lose the pleasures of this world, will we not drink deeply of the wells of salvation, wherein we may find pleasures for evermore?

Oh, do not be afraid of giving up! Why you know *nothing* of Jesus, of His love and tender pity, if there is anything you would rather keep instead of Him. Why need you fear? Has he not loved you enough? He has *died* for you, and will He want you to give up anything that will distress you, unless it is that He may bless you? Will not you let Him bless you? Do not let the things that are to be, of which you know hardly anything separate you from Jesus. Take Him to yourself; make Him your Master; receive Him as such, and be *ready* to obey Him. Place yourself as His servant; you will soon find you are far more than even that. Receive Him, expecting that He will make many alterations in your manner of life—expecting, too, to be blessed above measure. When you receive Him thus, there will be such a quiet in your heart: *He* is there to rule, to reign; *your* only responsibility is to obey. Even that is hardly a responsibility; for He will win you so lovingly, that it will be your most ardent desire.

Thus the rest begins the moment you receive Him. meaning to submit entirely to Him. It *begins* here, and it has no ending. You receive Him, and you find He was there all the time, standing sorrowfully by, while you directed and ruled. Now His joy will make you full of joy, for you understand what it is to have Him "with you". Then your *life* begins—a real life, because lived with Jesus, ordered, ruled, guided by Him.

Still, although bound so closely to Jesus, at first specially, you will find yourself planning and arranging with no reference to Him. But how it will fill you with sorrow! Is He so near, so dear to you, and yet

you can forget Him? It gives you a sight of your utter sinfulness, and of your mighty need of Him; but this need not discourage you; take it to Jesus, and He will make it right for you, and gradually will come to you a most deep and comforting sense of the impossibility of living apart from Him.

The habit of relying on ourselves is so strong that we cannot break it. But be not downcast; take it to Jesus; He will break it for you, and make you to rely implicitly on Himself: and the bond will be so dear, so sweet, that by and bye it will need no "making"; it will be the simple, needful outpour of a child's love, and needs, and wants on its Father's bosom. Ah! rest there, always, always, all through the long, weary day. *There* "the weary are at rest". You will not need to be reminded, "I am with you," but it will be your joy to hear Him say it, and your joy to answer in praying Him to draw you closer and closer, till for ever we "see Him as He is, and are made like unto Him".

Leaning on Him, all fears and dreads must be stilled; you have one answer for everything—*Jesus*. That is all we need for any hope, however mighty—for any fear, however deep. It is not that the things themselves are different, but that we stand in a different relation towards them; and thus, when you lay any trouble, or sorrow, or difficulty with Him, you need fret about it no more; you need only wait patiently for his answer He will soon send it, and His love and sympathy will be yours at once. Oh, the comfort and joy of having Jesus thus—not a long way off, far away in heaven, but close to you, near you, in the room with you! Oh, the rest of putting all into His care, the past and the future, and living in the one day at a time that He sends to us. We can trust Him with everything and for everything. Nothing that concerns us can ever be indifferent to Him; indeed, far, far from that, it is His great anxiety and care.

Oh, it is a life-giving, blessed thought! How it should make glad our hearts, and make every day a song of joy and thanksgiving, that not only by this union with Christ do we ourselves get immeasurable joy and consolation, but that we even give joy to Him. He can say of many of us, "This is my beloved"; and if we are turning to Him with our whole soul, will He not add perhaps, "In whom I am well pleased"? When with His disciples He ate the last supper, He said to them, "With desire have I desired to eat this *passover* with you;" and "He took bread and blessed it, and

gave it to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body." How long He has offered Himself to us, that, eating of Him, daily, hourly, all the day long we may be satisfied! How long has He with desire desired to feast all the day long with us, and we with Him! And now that at last some of us have understood His voice, and are "with Him always," perhaps our Saviour even now may begin to be satisfied with the travail of His soul.

"BAPTIZED FOR THE DEAD."

1 CORINTHIANS XV. 29.

"**I***f in His life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable*"; for our sufferings down here, for Christ's sake, never cease (1 Cor. iv. 9-13), and if we are suffering for a mere fancy, what a folly so to do!

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept?" and we know that in our own order, at His coming, we shall be made alive from the dead—"For God hath so ordained".

We know we are trusting in no vain hope, for God has sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, so that we know Him that is true, and have His Spirit witnessing to our Spirits that we are His children now, and shall eventually be with Him. (1 John iii. 1, 2.)

Now if all this was false, what should we do? We have been buried with Him by the baptism into death" (see Greek), that we might, as raised ones, quickened by His Spirit, walk in newness of life. We are walking in the power of resurrection; our affections, our hopes, our aims are altered. They are set on things above, where Christ sitteth at God's right hand. We have been baptized into His death truly, as those who have learned their own dead estate, and their need of receiving a new life from Him, the Risen One. So we have been baptized as dead ones, owning our natural estate as vile and faulty, and confessing our need of a new estate, which we have now gotten, through faith in Jesus Christ.

What use would all this be if there was no resurrection? Why should we submit to such things? Why should we be persecuted and suffer? Why undergo such a separating ordinance? Why make the confession in baptism of our vileness of nature and need of a

new life, if the dead rise not? Why should anyone live save after the desires of his own heart? "Be not deceived," 'tis a snare of Satan's. He would have you think there is no life to come. "Evil communications" from him, as an angel of light, corrupt your true habits.

There is a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. We know it, for Christ has risen—yea, hath been seen of many credible witnesses; and if Christ is risen, we shall rise also, for of this we have assurance, both from His Word and by His spirit that dwelleth in us.

We know it, for already, sustained by Him, we walk in newness of life, old things having passed away, and so we are willingly baptized as those who have died to sin, and would take our place down here as those who are dead to the world, and have no link to it any longer, having been made alive from the dead by God.

We are "baptized for the dead," not by the ordinance in which we so declared it, but by the self-same God who baptized His Israel of old in the cloud and in the sea, as a redeemed people whom He had delivered for Himself.

He has baptized us into Christ's death, and raised us up in newness of life to be His separated people. And He makes us content to suffer all things, not accepting deliverance, in hope of a better resurrection.

A. O. M.

THE MEDIATOR.

CHRISt is not only "the Mediator of the New Covenant," that is, a relation which He holds towards believers only, He is also "the Mediator between God and man". The holiness of God must have forbidden that any mercy should have been granted to a world of sinners—Cain could not have been protected and preserved if respite from that judgment which must finally overtake the unpardoned had not been granted in virtue of the foreseen sacrifice of Christ. Every sinner that now moves upon the earth owes every mercy he receives to the blood of Jesus. Thereby alone he is bought back from present destruction, and made the recipient of many a blessing which his conscience tells him are proofs of patient and long-suffering love. All his mercies are purchased mercies, purchased by the blood of the Lamb. How needful that all men, especially in their early years,

should rightly understand these things! If, before they have individually believed the gospel, we teach them that they are in any sense brought under the blood of Jesus, or that they stand in any covenant relation to God as regards their souls, we deceive them unto destruction. On the other hand, if, because they are yet without the circle of redemption, we teach them that they are therefore in no sense subjects of love from God and from Christ, if we tell them that God is as distant from them as their affections are distant from Him, we shall surely strengthen their impenitency, render obduracy more obdurate, and probably drive carelessness into the recklessness of despair.

Teach them, on the contrary, how many and great mercies—mercies withheld from the angels who sinned—encompass their paths; and that every such mercy is an evidence of the love of God, and a result likewise of the suffering and death of Jesus. Above all, teach them that God cares for their souls and draws nigh to them in the ministry of reconciliation, preaching peace by Jesus, and we put before them that which, because it is truth, the Spirit can use, it may be, to their soul's everlasting blessing.—*Extract.*

IMMEASURABLE LOVE.

OH! Father, teach these lips of mine
A gladsome note to sing;
Sweep o'er my heart that I may now,
A note of music bring.
Music to cheer some child of thine
Walking life's lonely way;
Causing a gleam of hope to shine
Across some darksome day.
Yet, if 'tis dark we know each ill
Come's from Thy tender hand,
And has a mission to fulfil
We may not understand;
But when with Thee, then, Thou wilt show
How thou hast led each hour,
And every mystery we shall know
Of Wisdom, Love, and Power
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My theme is not Creation work,
Thy energy and power,
As written on the glimmering stars
On mountain, leaf or flower.
I must not sing of sailing clouds
Under their dome of blue,

Tho' well I know Thou madest them,
With all their changing hue.
Tho', Father, Thou did'st gild them with
The sunset's golden gleam,
Dipping them in the glory of
The Summer evening sheen;
Until it seems like Heaven land,
Outbreaking through the sky,
As if the glory had o'er flowed
Of the Home that far off lies.
I cannot sing of restless waves,
The boundless, beauteous sea,
That madly leaps, or gently laves,
In quiet majesty;
Nor can I sing of raging storm,
When lightnings brand the skies,
Or of thy whisper in the breeze
That thro' the woodland sighs.
Tho', Father, I behold Thy Hand
In all these glorious things,
'Tis not of these, however grand,
My happy spirit sings.—
'Tis Calvary, the awful tree,
Where my Redeemer died;
The one who gave Himself for me
'Tis Jesus crucified.
Here shall my happy spirit sing
Of Love that made me thine,
That could some note of worship bring
From such a heart as mine
Oh! Love unmeasured, stretching far,
Beyond my utmost gaze,
Fairer than sun or brightest star,
That shines in silent praise;
Deeper than sin's deep depth of woe
Higher than heaven above;
More boundless than the Ocean's flow,
Immeasurable Love.
Oh! peerless Love, Oh! matchless grace,
My soul shall sing of thee
More sweetly when I see the face,
Of Him who died for me.

S. TREVOR FRANCIS.

"CHRISTIANS."

IT is very observable that in all the names the early Christians chose there was still some peculiar relation to Christ and God, from whom they would named, and not from any mortal man how great eminent soever. Party names and human appellations they ever professed to abhor. "We take not denomination from men," says Chrysostom. "

have no leaders as the followers of Marcion, Manichæus, or Arius."

"No," says Epiphanius, "the church was never called so much as by the name of any apostle; we never heard of Petrians, or Paulians, or Bartholomæans, or Thadæans, but only of Christians from Christ." "I honour Peter," says another father, "but I am not called a Petrian. I honour Paul, but I am not called a Paulian, I cannot bear to be named from any man who am the creature of God."

They observe that this was only the property of sects and heresies to take party names, and denominate themselves from their leaders. But the Church of Christ still kept to the name of Christian. This was the name they gloried in as most expressive of their unity and relation to Christ.

Eusebius records a memorable story out of the Epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienna in France, concerning one Sanctus, a deacon of the Church of Vienna, who suffered in the persecution under Antonine; that being put to the rack and examined by the magistrates concerning his name, his country, his city, his quality, whether he were bond or free; his answer to all their questions was, I am a Christian; this he said was to him both name, and city, and kindred, and everything. Nor could the heathens with all their skill extort any other answer from him. St. Chrysostom gives the like account of the behaviour of Lucian the martyr before his persecutors, and there were some other instances of the same nature, by which we may judge how great a veneration they had for the name Christian.—*Bingham's "Antiquities"*.

96 COMMERCIAL STREET,
LERWICK, 11th July, 1878.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—The readers of the *Northern Witness*, especially those of them who are interested in Shetland, will doubtless be glad to hear that the first Conference of Christians who gather to the name of Jesus, ever held in Shetland, was held here on Wednesday, 3rd July. The weather being fine, a large number came in from the country, some of our sisters walking as far as 17 or 18 miles in order to be present. All the brethren labouring in the gospel in Shetland were also present. Much prayer was offered up on behalf of the meetings, and the Lord answered abundantly. We spent six hours happily and profitably together. The meetings were held in the Masons' Hall, which was packed. There would be nearly 130 present. The first hour, from 4 p.m. to 5, was spent in prayer. From 5 to 6.30 was devoted to "Reports of the Lord's work in Shetland". These reports went to

show that the Lord is working and blessing souls in all the places visited by labourers, some of whom testifying that they never before witnessed such a thirsting for the Word of Life. In Sandwick (14 miles south from Lerwick) the Lord has been pleased greatly to bless the preaching and teaching of Jesus. A little over two months ago a few began to come together in the name of Jesus to break bread, and there are now over 30 in fellowship (all baptized), and more to follow. The little hall here is not able to accommodate all who come to hear the Word on Lord's-day evenings, 50 or 60 standing outside listening at the doors when the weather is fine. We are looking to the Lord to open the way for a new hall, that the work be not hindered. The Lord has also been working in Whiteness and Sandsound and other places on the west of the mainland, where our brother, John Bain, has been patiently labouring for some months. A good work was done in Lerwick last winter; many were then saved. Others have professed conversion during the last few weeks. A number have also followed the Lord in baptism, and are now in fellowship with those gathered to Jesus in the Masons' Hall. Brother M. T. Boswell has had a course of "teaching" meetings here lately, attended with much blessing to the saints. He is now gone to Whiteness to minister to the saints there. Doors are open for the gospel all over the Islands. We ask prayer that the Lord will send labourers to enter them.

From 6.30 to 7.30 was set apart for tea and conversation.

From 7.30 to 10 was devoted to answering questions, which were handed in during tea-time. The questions were all bearing on practical subjects, and were answered by Brother Boswell and others. Altogether it was really a *practical*, profitable, blessed meeting. The Christians from the different gatherings were drawn together, and their interest in the work of the Lord quickened.

We trust the Lord's people in the south will pray for Shetland; also, that labourers may be sent out to supply the place of our brothers William Sloan (who has now gone to the Faroe Isles) and James Law, who is leaving for Aberdeen for a little rest.

The labourers left are Brothers M. T. Boswell, John Bain, John Martin, and myself.

Yours in the blessed hope of a coming Lord,

ALEX. S. RIGG.

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## JEHOSHAPHAT.

II CHRON. XVII.

THE earlier years of Jehoshaphat's reign were marked by much faithfulness to Jehovah, and consequent prosperity. Herein is to be seen a specimen of the difference between the past and present dispensations. Faithfulness to the Lord *now* will set no one on high in the sight of the nations. On the contrary, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution". (Tim. iii. 12.) Faithfulness brought the Lord Jesus the Cross; nevertheless He had abundant assurance that His Father was with Him at every step, and in resurrection God has publicly set His seal upon that life and death of obedience.

So it is with those who follow in His steps. The world may judge their lives to have been an utter failure, but at the coming of the Lord and at His judgment-seat, it will be found that faithfulness to the Lord is after all the only path of success and prosperity. That which brought Jehoshaphat riches and honour and abundance in this life, will bring the suffering saint the present day "riches and honour in abundance" when the age to come.

It is written that Jehoshaphat "walked in the first ways of his father and of David (see margin), and sought not unto Baalim". Reference to the history of his father Asa will explain the allusion to his first ways. His first ways were those of faith and obedience; latterly unbelief took possession of his heart, and he departed from the Lord, and died under the heavy chastening hand of God. He also walked in the ways of David, who, notwithstanding his many failures, was never at any time found to go after or to

countenance another God. Like the needle in the compass, which, though for a time it may be deflected by external forces, yet finds no rest, but trembles back again to the pole, so David, howsoever he might for a time be turned aside, could never rest till with a broken and contrite heart he returned to find his rest in God.

Such was Jehoshaphat. "He sought to the Lord God of his fathers, and walked in His commandments, and not after the doings of Israel: therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand."

Israel, the name here given throughout to the ten tribes who revolted from the house of David, had utterly apostatized from Jehovah. The godly remnant among them could have no fellowship with their ungodly doings. So it is written: "The Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priests' office unto the Lord, and he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made; and after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto the Lord God of their fathers". (2 Chron. xi. 14-16.) This movement, of course, strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and more so when, in the days of Asa's prosperity, "they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him". (2 Chron. xv. 9.)

This provoked the indignation of Baasha, King of Israel, so that he came up against Judah and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa, King of Judah. (xvi. i.)

Thus Israel hardened itself in its apostacy, not only cleaving to its own humanly devised, or devil-devised, order of worship, but raising opposition as insurmountable as possible to all who would seek the Lord according to His own word.

And such is yet the way of man's religion. Far more serious difficulties and stumbling-blocks are placed in the way of the true-hearted, by self-willed Israel than by Egyptians or Babylonians.

And this was the condition of things when Jehoshaphat began to reign: only as king after king arose in Israel, each was worse than the former, and Ahab who then reigned was worse than any who had preceded him. "And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him. And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the Kings of Israel that were before him." (1 King xvi. 31-33.)

Seeing that such was the character of Israel and of their king, it is not surprising that the godly Jehoshaphat is said to have "strengthened himself against Israel". (2 Chron. xvii. 1.) Boldly he stood forth as a witness for Jehovah and His truth—strengthening not only the material defences of the nation, but what was far more important and to the glory of God, causing the people to be instructed in the Word of the Lord. For this work he selected Princes, Levites, and Priests—for it was an honourable and responsible work, and chiefly pertained to the tribe of Levi and to the house of Aaron. (See Lev. x. 11, Deut. xxxiii. 10.) Moreover, "they had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and they went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people". (xvii. 9.) What a contrast all this presented to the miserable condition of Israel! "Without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law." (2 Chron. xv. 3.) Hardly would one have supposed that any of the faithful could have remained among the apostate tribes; yet when Elijah stood forth as Jehovah's witness at the very darkest hour, when he lamented that he alone was left a servant of the Lord, he received the remarkable rebuke: "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him". (1 Kings xix. 19.) There they were, indeed, known to the Lord, but alas!

in what a miserable condition. Elijah did not even know of their existence. Obadiah, who "feared the Lord greatly," had in Ahab's court as little influence for God as Jonathan had in Saul's, yet as Jonathan loved David, so Obadiah loved the servants of the Lord and hid the prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water. God is not unrighteous to forget such work of faith and labour of love, but happier far were they who, in obedience to the Lord's command, went up to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord and dwelt there.

The eighteenth chapter of 2 Chronicles opens with the startling announcement: "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab".

Also in the short epitome of his life given in 1 Kings xxii. 41-50, after a few words of very high commendation, it is written: "NEVERTHELESS the high places were not taken away, . . . and Jehoshaphat made peace with the King of Israel".

The great prosperity which Jehoshaphat enjoyed seems to have insensibly undermined his spiritual energies. It was a wise desire of the Apostle John for Gaius: "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth". (3 John 2.) It takes a steady hand to carry a full cup, and few there are of the Lord's people who have been able to bear earthly prosperity without spiritual declension. Adversity often proves a blessing in disguise. Many are there of God's children who have had occasion to bless the hand that stripped them of their earthly treasures and led them to rejoice in the love unchangeable of the Mighty Giver rather than in the abundance of His gifts.

Scripture does not record the steps which led to this disastrous intimacy between Jehoshaphat and the house of Ahab. Once he regarded the King of Israel according to his true character, as an enemy against whom he and his kingdom must be strengthened; but now Satan's devices have so far succeeded that he makes peace with him, joins affinity with him, and visits him as his honoured guest on terms of intimate friendship.

Perhaps Jehoshaphat was somewhat influenced by Ahab's repentance at the terrible announcement of judgment which Elijah brought to him?

But whatever may have been the sincerity or duration of Ahab's penitence, he never turned from his false religion, or attempted a reformation in his kingdom.

He remained ungodly still, a hater of the Lord, and utterly unfit to be a companion of Jehoshaphat.

But backsliding in heart is subtle in its workings and terrible in its effects. It creeps, by imperceptible degrees, like a chill paralysis over the soul, impairing its spiritual discernment, and predisposing it to the influence of temptation, which would have been powerless to ensnare one who was walking in communion with God.

After the lapse of years this unhallowed friendship had so far developed that Jehoshaphat, doubtless at Ahab's invitation, went down to Samaria to pay what appears to have been a friendly visit. Ahab treated his royal guest with distinguished courtesy, and feasted luxuriously not only himself but his people, the retinue by which, as became his station, he was accompanied. All this was gratifying to the vanity of Jehoshaphat, who, ignorant of Satan's subtle wiles, saw not how he was being step by step ensnared. It is written: "The friendship of the world is enmity with God". (James v. 4.) The world will gladly be friends with the believer if he will only consent to hide the light, to maintain silence as to its ungodliness, to treat it on equal terms, as if the mighty questions at issue of life and death eternal, of subjection to God and His Word, or rebellion against His authority, were only matters of opinion, not of sufficient consequence to stand in the way of friendship.

Alas! such friendship, common as it is, is dearly purchased, and this the history of Jehosaphat abundantly illustrates.

Jehoshaphat was no less one of God's elect than Elijah; but he is feasted and honoured by the very man who trembled before Elijah, and greeted him with the mutterings of a guilty conscience, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" (1 Kings xxi. 20.)

And such is yet the difference of the reception which the world accords to the children of God. Some are welcomed and honoured. They pass current in respectable society. They can join in its so-called "innocent amusements," take their place at its feasts, appear on its platforms side by side with the formalist, the sceptic, the Unitarian, the mammon worshipper, the winebibber, or even the man of notoriously impure life. They never speak of Christ, or introduce His word on such occasions. They know it would not be palatable; it would be "out of season"; it might "give offence,"

and they might not be invited again, and thus they might "lose opportunities of doing good".

Others again have sought to reach the consciences of men and to contend for the truth of God wherever they had opportunity, even like their Master, who deemed it no breach of courtesy to rebuke the Pharisee and laud the woman who was a sinner, though He was a guest at the Pharisee's table.

Such are regarded as enemies or fools. In either case the Ahabs of this world seek not their society, and are glad so long as they avoid their path. But whilst Ahab's "*friend*" is sorely rebuked and chastened, his "*enemy*" is translated without tasting death!

J. R. C.

(To be continued.)

#### NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

By W. LINCOLN.

PART II. DIALOGUE II., FROM CHAP. III. 8 TO V. 1. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 103.

**B**UT not only does He thus testify that as soon as ever she begins to obey His invitation: "Come with ME from Lebanon," He is so delighted with one bend or turning or crease of her neck in that direction in which He leads, that the whole of the remainder of this address of His is in direct and sustained allusion to this her compliance with His expressed will. Further: let not the glowing terms escape our notice in which He gives utterance to His encomium of her choice of Himself as displayed in her action. As thus: (1) "How fair is thy love," He continues. A little before He had said, "How fair art thou". But now He can say more. He beholds her love in deed and rejoices. So here we observe a marked order in His language. First she herself is fair in His eyes, and then likewise is her love, that is to say, her manifested love of Him—love that costs her something, even as His love cost Him something, cost Him much. In this sense of our choice of Himself to something else, a sin or a pleasure or aught, is our love referred to in such passages as James i. 12, Rom. viii. 28. I mean that the "Love" here looks at our deliberate action towards Himself in view of His superior preciousness in our esteem to that which might otherwise retain our heart's affection. And thus here, as everywhere else, we find that first He loves us, His love of us being free and apart from all works of ours whatever. But then next we behold that

He is pleased when we do actually so begin to set a value on Himself, as to sacrifice our ease and ourselves at His gracious call ; when we prove that He Himself is dearer to us than aught and everything else. We are all aware such is His own teaching in Mark xiv. 3-9. This is worship, when we set Himself above everything, as the object of our heart's desire, and when we are satisfied with Him. This again is what Paul had in view when he expressed that desire of his, that he might win Christ, or rather that he might have Christ for his gain. (Phil. iii. 8, last clause, Greek.) For aught that stands in our way of fully enjoying Himself as our all is, whatever we may think, only a dead loss to us.

(2.) Now, too, He calls her "My sister, My spouse". And the title spouse occurs nowhere else throughout the Song. But here in this address it is found no less than six times. This is suggestive. For evidently the term is used still in reference to her response to His amazing grace in calling her to come with Him. The same style of language is found to be used in the book of the Revelation of that other and still more exalted Bride of His, the Church of God. For there she\* is called the "Wife of the Lamb". Truly indeed it is there implied how it is that from utter wretchedness He has saved her and how He has purchased her for Himself, by His blood. But more than this is the sentiment couched in that phrase. The thought is also and rather of her voluntary and hearty association with Himself in separation from a world that hates Him. So having been permitted and enabled by grace to share with Him His rejection, the glance is there appropriately made to her association with Himself in the glory of His coming reign. Yes, she is the Bride, "the *Lamb's* wife".

(3.) Again, the Bridegroom is here pleased to refer to her preciousness in His eyes, in language very similar to that which she had used in speaking of Him in chap. i. 2, 3. There she had declared that His "love was better than wine". So here He avouches that her "love is better than wine". She too had spoken of the savour of His good ointments, and here He, reciprocating her affection, testifies that "the smell of her ointments is better than all spices". Thus we perceive that her expressions of delight in Him had not passed unnoticed by Him ; but that He had, as it were,

\*A volume by the writer is in the press and is nearly ready, in which it is hoped that abundance of proof is offered that the Church is the Bride as well as the Body of Christ. The title of the book will be, "Typical Foreshadowings in Genesis".

treasured them up in His memory. And here His infinite condescension, repeats her own words in expression of His delight in her and in her obedience. And thus as His known preciousness and fulness dear to us ; so what we have been made by grace what we exhibit of the workings of grace, are given to Him. He is not ashamed to call us individual brethren ; and He will confess our names before Father. For we are God's workmanship ; we are of light. And what is there for Him to be ashamed in all this ? And specially when the operative divine power and wisdom are being manifested in constraining us to render prompt obedience to His holy will, His eyes in tender love are rivetted upon Brethren, we are prone to lose sight of this truth and reality. Because we know that He has a heart of compassion towards repenting sinners ; therefore liable to forget that He loves His saints and is grieved when they are intent upon pleasing Him when they value His smile above everything.

(4.) Once more—still in view of her having commenced to come with Him from Lebanon compares her to "a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed". (iv. 12.) By these three similes, He implied that she had recognised and reacted upon that recognition that she was to be His to be God's, even if, by separation unto Him from the world around her, it might appear that her ability to bless others had become less thereby, and that her acquaintances might seem to be losers. For what might fairly ask, is the value of a garden that is enclosed, or of a spring which is shut up, or of a fountain which is sealed ? A garden thus wall may not appear of so much good to others generally, but to its owner, it may in consequence have its value enhanced. God would have us to apprehend that He has bought us specially and supremely for Himself. Our influence among others ought by no means to be of prime consideration ; but our true-hearted consecration to God and to His Son, who gave His life for us. Who can have such claims on us as He ? And He desires us in a very peculiar manner for Himself. (Psalm iv. 3 and Ephes. i. 5.) Greatly do we mistake His mind who spend nearly all their time in strength in crowds and in active service, and retire to private communion with God but rarely and but for a few moments. Reverse this practice. Spend more of your time with God, and see if your influence

among your fellows is not vastly increased. It is recorded of Luther that, however busy he might be, he was wont to spend the two middle hours of his morning alone with God. And this true and divine order, if we follow it, will make evident to our hearts how appropriately verse 13 follows the statements of the Lord as to our being set apart peculiarly for God. For then will our plants become "an orchard of pleasant fruits, camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with *all* the chief spices". Whilst he who is little with God, will have little which he has got from God to give to his fellows; on the other hand, he who lets the truth permeate him that God and Christ are pleased to desire companionship with him, will be full of His love and of the knowledge of Him when such an one comes forth to speak to others. Where, for instance, did Enoch get the knowledge that the Lord was coming with his holy myriads, so that he told it out with such telling power, that his words lingered on in the minds of men for many centuries afterwards? Was it not in walking with God, and thus in having the testimony *before* his translation that he pleased God? We should not fail to observe in this list of pleasant things in this garden of God, enumerated by the Lord, how many of them evidently point to redeeming blood. So too, our words may be fewer among others if we are more with God, but there will be a love and an evangelical fulness in them that will affect the hearts of men.

Nor indeed is it really the fact that by being separated by His call unto Himself and by our gladly saving all in obedience to that call, we cease to be much of a blessing unto others! How strikingly verse 5 is contrasted with verse 12! If the three similes in verse 12 show that we are to be reserved peculiarly for God and Christ; so likewise the three in verse 15 prove that thus we get so full of mercy and of blessing as that it is if unconsciously, or at least without effort, good flows forth from us to those around us. Also, the order here is very instructive, and one which readers should deeply ponder. The ignoring of the sentiment in verse 12 and the being solely intent upon "doing good" is the secret cause of much of the barrenness of men's labours. Neither truth of course is to be disparaged. We are both to be wise virgins with oil in our lamps, and servants intent upon the increase of the talents committed to our charge. Such is in part the force of the

connexion between the first two parables of Matthew xxv. For we turned to God from idols, as well to wait for His Son from heaven as to serve the living and true God. (1st Thes. i. 9, 10.) He that abides in Christ and Christ in him, "the same bringeth forth *much* fruit". But if a man abides not in Christ, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. (See John xv. 5, 6.)

The other two verses of this dialogue, namely, chap. iv. 16, and v. 1, bring before us, first, the Bridegroom's solicitude that His garden, to which He had compared His spouse, might yield Him all the refreshment and delight that He looked for from it; next, and in consequence of that solicitude of His, the Bride instantly breathes a mental ejaculation desiring His own presence; and, lastly, an emphatic statement of His in reply to that earnest breathing of hers, that He had come and refreshed His soul with her love and with her recognition that she belonged to Him ("His garden"), and that all she had was from Himself. For I do not understand the closing words of iv. 16, and which are evidently the Bride's words, to be actually the beginning of the next dialogue. No; these few words of hers are inserted by way of a parenthesis in part; a sort of heart-breathing, uttered by her when the Bridegroom is about to cease His commendation of her act in coming from Lebanon with Him. And this said heart-breathing of hers evidently incites Him in closing to add the precious announcement of chap. v. 1. The fact is, the Bridegroom having now uttered in this second part of the Song two invitations, the one in the first dialogue of this second part (see ii. 10, 13) and the second invitation likewise in the second dialogue in this second part, in iv. 8—the first invitation, "Come out, or 'away'," and the second invitation, "Come with Me from Lebanon"—the Bride had now at length somewhat got His own spirit, and rising to the occasion, she too ventures to utter an invitation correspondingly unto Him, and so in this heart-whisper she ejaculates that she too desires His companionship. And this invitation of her heart, He in conclusion states that He most gladly complies with and at once. If some confirmation of the arrangement suggested above of this part of the Song be desired, it need only be noticed that immediately in the next verses a third invitation of the Lord's is heard, proving that then we reach a third dialogue, and which is found upon examination to be one partaking not a little of a different tone to that which pervades this second one. I may add that there is a similar interruption or break by her through her exceeding joy in chap. vii. 9, where the former part of the verse is uttered by the Bridegroom, and the latter part, beginning with the words "for my Beloved," is clearly the language of the Bride in her ecstasy.

## D A V I D.

"SAUL WAS AFRAID OF DAVID."

WHAT a remarkable combination is traceable in that man!—a shadow of him in whom all possible iniquity, human and Satanic, will be centred, and by whom it will be practised. "The son of perdition," "who shall ascend out of the abyss, and go into perdition"; "The lawless one," *i.e.*, "the man of sin," "the antichrist". If Nebuchadnezzar foreshadowed him as the head of Gentile power against Israel, Saul points to his association with Israel as under delusion.

But why did Saul fear David? What made the youthful shepherd so formidable in Saul's eyes? Not as a *man* did he fear him, but as *God's man*; not because David manifested enmity or even rebellion, but because Saul discerned that Jehovah was with him. He dreaded the man who trusted in God and walked before Him, on whom the Spirit of God rested, who had departed from Saul.

Saul then "removed David from before him, and made him captain over a thousand, and he went in and out before the people".

This step only increased his trouble and fear, for David so behaved himself that Jehovah was with him, and he prospered. "And Saul was yet the more afraid of him."

Human schemes and earth-born expedients adopted in the day of trouble only increase the trial and deepen the sorrow.

Beloved reader, there is no refuge, no true way of deliverance and joy but trust in God and subjection to His will. In all your trials and difficulties deal directly with God, and wait His time and way out of them.

If Saul envied, hated, and feared David, all Israel and Judah loved him, for he served them. His was a chequered path, even as was that of his Lord after him, and as ours also is. Light and dark, crooked and straight, bitter and sweet (as we view things), yet all working together for good whether to him or to ourselves.

If one of Saul's plans failed he adopted another; if by removing David from his immediate presence he only increased his fear of him, he will now try to remove him altogether from the earth, and, by killing David, rid himself of this terrible trial.

But he will do it craftily.

Saul proposed to give David his daughter Merab to wife, promising himself David's ruin as the end. Diabolical wickedness, through a human heart and head!

The Antichrist will be the devil's counterpart.

But Saul deceived David, and when his daughter should have been given to him she was given to another.

I do not gather from the history that David lost much by this.

Saul then promised him Michal, and she loved David.

Affection is the life of relationship; relationship without love is a sounding brass.

The dowry demanded by Saul was to be an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, hoping for David's death through them.

Had Saul forgotten the signal victory in Elah's valley? or did he imagine that numbers could bind the mighty hand of God, that he entertained such a hope! Whichever it was, he soon discovered his mistake, when the foreskins of the conquered Philistines were delivered in full tail, and Michal became the shepherd's wife and David the king's son-in-law.

Saul sank still deeper in the waters of vexation and hatred, forming other murderous plans against the Lord's anointed.

Sin hardens the heart and stultifies the conscience. Enmity against God brings His judgment, and judgment provokes enmity, but does not subdue it.

"Every one shall be salted *with fire*."

Perceiving that Michal really loved David, that the union was one of affection, Saul's fears increased. He no longer concealed his purpose, but gave commandment to Jonathan and to his servants that they should kill David.

But David went on and prospered. "He behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was much set by." His life was in safe keeping. It was not the sport of Saul's envy, but Jehovah's care. He was destined to reign; therefore could not die short of the throne.

Paul was told not to fear, for he *must* stand before Cæsar; therefore he could not be lost on the voyage. "My purpose, saith Jehovah, shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure." "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

As one means to this end Jehovah used the true friendship of Jonathan. He warned David of his danger, and interceded with Saul (his father) on David's

behalf. The result was the softening of Saul's spirit, and his oath that David should not die.

"The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the rivers of water. He turneth it whithersoever He will."

David returned to his place in the presence of Saul as in time past; but the rest was short. First, a battle with the Philistines was fought, in which David engaged and conquered. Then, as a consequence, Saul's envy was stirred. The evil spirit from Jehovah came upon him as David played in his presence, and Saul sought again to smite him to the wall.

For David there was no rest; no real refuge save in Jehovah Himself; none in Saul's presence; none in his home even with the wife who loved him, for there he was watched, and only escaped by artifice. Yet all these steps led to the throne; all these circumstances were intended to fit him for rule. They constituted, for him, as a dear departed brother has said,\* "the school of God".

Dear reader, let us see to it that we use our circumstances, as thrifty merchants seek to use passing events, viz., for profit; to learn God through them all.

David fled from Saul to Samuel, the prophet of Jehovah, who had anointed him to be king, told him all that Saul had done to him, and they two went to dwell in Naioth of Ramah.

Naioth did not long prove a sanctuary, for the persecutor found him out, and he fled from thence, returned to Jonathan, and asked, "What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father that he seeketh my life?"

Thus the history supplies us with information as to David's movements, but for the exercise of his soul we must inquire elsewhere. History records his steps, but the Psalms reveal his heart. His actual experience was the groundwork of the greater number of them, and when writing this the Spirit of Christ led him beyond himself to utter or write that which was, is, and will be true in his Lord, in the remnant of His nation, and the future nation itself. In them we also find language for the expression of our feelings, but uttered to Jehovah under a title not found in them—"Father".

Jehovah was the title for Israel, as it still is. The time will come when they shall say: "Truly, Thou art our Father. We are the clay and Thou the potter; we are the work of Thy hands."

Jonathan was slow to believe his father's murderous

\* The late J. L. Harris.

intentions, and being, as he said, in full and free communication with his father, he denied his father's purposes against David, yet promised to do all that he wished.

The result of this interview was, sad to say, an unbelieving and untruthful arrangement and speech.

How necessary it is when reading Old Testament history to remember the comparative dimness of the revelation of God, which is light to men; for as is the clearness of the revelation, so is the guilt of disobedience, of sin, and the measure of its correction.

At the times of this ignorance of the nations, or Gentiles, God winked, said the Apostle, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because the next thing is judgment on the impenitent. Grace now to the repenting and believing; but there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin to them who reject Christ. In like manner the patience of God was manifested towards His offending people then as it may not now be expected. He who bore with duplicity then struck Ananias and Sapphira dead upon the spot for their deceit and lies.

Faith in God alone can enable us to be thoroughly upright, truthful at all times.

A yearly family sacrifice in Bethlehem and a command for him to be present was David's feigned plea and excuse to Saul for his absence from the table, and this was conveyed to Saul through Jonathan.

Jonathan sounded his father respecting David, and discovered his determination to kill David. True to his promise and oath, and by the appointed sign, Jonathan communicated all to David. They met, they kissed, they wept, and parted—David to wander whither he might, and Jonathan returned to his home.

"David went to Nob to Ahimelech, the priest," who feared, and questioned him because he was alone. "Why art thou alone and no man with thee?" To this question David replied by a graver falsehood than the first.

Dear reader! what shall we say to this? What shall we do? Shall we be self-complacent and plume ourselves? Shall we glory over David, and be bitter against him? No, neither; but be admonished. "The flesh profits nothing;" it is always wrong.

The world sees David's faults, but only to excuse their own; they see not his repentance: therefore can only despise.

Let us learn a lesson.

From my knowledge, small as it is, of God's ways with His children, I should presume that David had not effectually judged himself for his falsehood; hence so quick a repetition, and a more glaring one.

God corrects His children for slight dealing and slack judgment of one sin by allowing them to fall into a more open one. Sin in action is a correction for neglected sins in thought or desire. Dear reader, let us learn to judge ourselves before God for everything, be it ever so secret, that is contrary to His Word, and also seek cleansing from faults *we* do not discover.

H. H.

### "LEARN OF ME"

Matt. xi. 29.

**T**HESE words penetrate deeper than the thunders of Sinai.

The express commands and prohibitions of the law meet a ready response from proud human hearts, which are ever ready to say, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do". But when the lips of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, of Him who made Himself of no reputation, and who was rejected and despised of men, are heard to say, "Learn of Me," a path of patient suffering and service is discovered, for which none are prepared who have not the mind of Christ.

To learn of Him, as His ways and His will are revealed in the Word, is to learn subjection till "every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ". For he has opened to us much of His hidden life, as he learned obedience on the earth by the things which He suffered, and as He glorified the Father by the perfect fulfilment of His will.

He was in truth the only and beloved Son of God, and by Him were all things created. "He was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person." And yet, when He humbled Himself to the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man, He yielded Himself in unreserved surrender to a place of complete dependence, and lived by every word which proceeded out of the mouth of God. It is only as we understand this, that we can estimate aright his years of childhood, youth, and manhood, till His appointed time should come; and the wonderful word He uttered when He said, "I can of My ownself do nothing; as I hear I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will,

but the will of My Father who hath sent Me". (John v. 30.) It is in the light of such words that we can enter into the meaning of Jehovah's call; "Behold, My servant whom I uphold; Mine elect in whom My soul delighteth". (Isa. xlii. 1.)

None but He could with truth say, "I seek not my own glory," and "I do always the things that please the Father," (John viii.) for He lived in unbroken fellowship with Him, of whom He said, "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth me morning by morning. He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned" or "the instructed one". (Isai. l. 4.) It was in this fellowship that He rejoiced continually, "I will bless the Lord that giveth me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night season. I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." (Psalm xvi. 7-8.)

Into what paths of trial He was thus led, we learn from the Word, "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief". And how His obedience was tested we know from that scene of supreme distress, when the moment approached for Him to bear the guilt of man, and so to meet the righteous wrath of God. "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what I will but what Thou wilt!" And thus He went forward, when delivered into the hands of sinners: "I gave My back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not My face from shame and spitting." And onward still, "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". "Therefore," says the Apostle, "God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." (Phil. ii.)

Here then we learn the force of the words "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart". Human examples are easily imitated, but he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and it is only as united to Him, and abiding in Him, that we can walk even as he walked. To say in sincere humility "I can of my ownself do nothing," and to act on the conviction that we are "Not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves," we must have been taught of God. Natural ardour of disposition, natural gifts of various kinds, may carry us far on in the esteem of men, and in the appearance of devoted service; but to renounce

dependence on all that is of the flesh, and to wait on the Lord in the assurance of His power to use the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty—even by “the worm Jacob” to thresh mountains; to go on patiently, not seeking the praise of men, or, in any wise, our own will, or our own glory, but the favour and the praise, and the will and glory of our Father only, this is the fruit of the Spirit, transforming us into the likeness of Christ.

It is by this life of simple dependence that we can most effectually glorify God, and therefore it is from this excellency that our adversary will as often as he can, cast us down. To lead us into it, our gracious Lord again and again has to humble us, disappointing our vanity and ambition, and exhibiting to us melancholy proofs of power and usefulness decaying, in proportion as the pride of gifts takes the place of simple and childlike subjection and dependence. His strength is indeed made perfect in our weakness, and in the true knowledge of this, we can echo the words, “Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” (2 Cor. xii. 9-10.)

It ought not to be hard to learn this lesson! If the Son of God with all His inherent and infinite power maintained His chosen place of dependence, and submitted himself perfectly in all His service, from day to day, to His Father’s will, how wonderful is the pride which in our hearts lifts us up in self-sufficiency, and claims the glory of the fruit which He bestows! May we learn more perfectly the wisdom of fellowship with our Lord; and in taking His yoke upon us, find rest to our souls! To live habitually in subjection of spirit to Him, attempting nothing in our own strength, denying ourselves in all our pride and self esteem, this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us. Thus humbling ourselves He will honour us, and we shall learn the secret of effectual service, and partake of that blessing which maketh rich and with which He adds no sorrow. We shall thus live with a single eye, and the whole body full of light, having no dark part, and shall be building up work which in the day of final accounting for our service, will not be burned up, but will “abide,” and be crowned with the full reward of His precious smile and praise. M. W.

### “REVELLINGS AND SUCH LIKE.”

GALATIANS V. 21.

THESE are the last words of that black list of the works of the flesh, recorded in the Epistle to the Galatians. While many are mentioned by name, others fall under the comprehensive expression—“and such like”. They are alike in their source and in their object: their source is the corrupt heart of man—their object the gratification of his desires. In the earliest page of man’s history it is written, “All flesh had corrupted his way on the earth”; and the history of the human family has been the history of this corruption. “God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions.” Some of the inventions which man has sought out, are recorded in Scripture; but they are there spoken of as the “works of the flesh”. God instituted marriage for man’s comfort and blessedness: man sought out adultery for the gratification of his own lust. God gave man the vine, to produce wine to cheer man’s heart; but man turns this blessing into drunkenness; and lest he should have troublesome thoughts of God, he invented “revellings,” in order that by gratifying his senses—his ears by music—his taste by wine, or other things,—his thoughts might be turned away from God: “the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands”.

Hence we find that it has been during the time of revelling that men have encouraged themselves in wickedness, and most deeply insulted God. Let us take an example from the old Testament (Dan. v.): “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. While he tasted the wine, he commanded to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine and praised the gods of gold and silver,” &c.

It was during the revelling that there “came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king’s palace” these words, as a message from God to him, “God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it.

Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." "Then was the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, so that his knees smote one against another: and in the same night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, slain." Such was the end of his revelling!!

It is true that men do not now see the hand sent forth nor the writing written, in the midst of their revellings, because God has once for all recorded his judgment of revellings,—they are a work of the flesh, and *they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. But how often is the heart sick, how often is the conscience uneasy in the midst of revelling, as if the handwriting were seen on the wall. How constantly does revelling leave a wretched void after it is over, to prove that the pleasure it promises perishes in the using.

Let us take a New Testament example of revelling, Mark vi. "And when a convenient day was come, Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee: and when the daughter of Herodias came in, and danced and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, "ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee". And he sware unto her, "whatsoever thou shalt ask of me," I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked saying, I will that thou give me by-and-by the head of John the Baptist in a charger."

Does not this narrative make our blood thrill with horror? A young woman thus bearing to her mother as a prize, the head of an innocent and righteous man. Surely none who entered to partake of that revelling, ever anticipated so horrid and revolting a scene. It is true that out of the heart proceed murders (Mark vii. 21), but it is "revellings and such like" which call them out into action. First of all, the wanton dance in the presence of so many men, had tended to throw aside all female modesty: and when that was gone, she was quite prepared to be partner with her guilty mother, who hated John for daring to interfere with her adulterous intercourse with Herod. "She desired to kill him, but she could not." So long as John lived, he was the

witness against the sin of Herodias. He was no less the witness against the corruptions of the court—against "revellings and such like," "for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, *he did many things*, and heard him gladly". Herod's conscience was not easy, but it was defiled, it was deadened by the surrounding scene. When hand joins in hand in revelry, it is hard even for an honest conscience to make a stand. But Herod's was a guilty conscience, not easy under the word of John who had told him, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife". There is no resolution where there is an uneasy conscience. "The king was exceedingly sorry: yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her." There was no fear of God before the eyes of Herod,—he was surrounded by other objects, he regarded his own honour and he feared his own guests. He was sorry to commit murder, but then his honour appeared to be at stake,—he had pledged his oath and he would not break that, no not even to prevent murder. And what was John in the eyes of all the guests of Herod, but the hinderer of their pleasures because the faithful reprovcr of their sins. Had Herod faltered, he would have been laughed at as the enemy of revelry and mirth; and where there is no fear of God, a man would rather murder an innocent man, than lose his character with men by breaking the *law of honour* as it is called. John was murdered, and the revelling went on.

And so it was again in the case of Him of whom John was the forerunner. The world rejoiced because Jesus was crucified. So long as He was in it, He hindered its joys. Reader, did it ever occur to you that the world has joy now because Jesus is not in the world, because the world has rejected Him? Let Him only appear and its laughter will be turned into heaviness,—it will be "woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep". But it may be you are seeking in revelling a cure for an aching heart and discontented soul. Jesus knows you will not find it there, and therefore in pity he says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest". He can bind up the broken heart; yea, He Himself is God's remedy for human sorrow and misery. God gives joy even in this world,—the fruit of the Spirit is joy; not the joy of this world, but joy in the Lord. There is not an ache but sin has caused it. And God's remedy for human misery is to put away sin. Jesus is the

to take away sin. Look to Him as such. He, Son of God, has shed His blood; that blood alone takes away sin. It cleanses from all sin.

That which has come to Jesus needs no longer to seek rest in any other object. He can rejoice in himself, in the present salvation,—he can rejoice in hope of glory,—he can rejoice in present trials,—he can rejoice in God, now revealed as love in the redemption which Christ Jesus. He can no longer seek his joy in things and such like. He may have tried them and that trial has been sufficient to prove how unsatisfying they are. He desires to live the

his time in the flesh, not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. He can say with the Apostle, "The time past of our life may suffice us to have attained to the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in uncleanness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to God, that is ready to judge the quick and the dead".

I think it strange that others go not on with them in revellings and such like; but they who have got their joy in Jesus, would think it strange indeed to be seeking for it anywhere else than in Him. May your joy be in the Lord; and then God's commandment shall be fulfilled: "Rejoice evermore".

J. L. HARRIS.

#### PSALM lxxx. 1; REV. v. 6.

O LAMB of God, we lift our eyes  
To Thee amidst the Throne,  
Shine on us, bid Thy light arise  
And make Thy glory known.

We know Thy work for ever done,  
Ourselves alive and free,  
Graced with the Spirit of the Son,  
Made nigh to God in Thee.

Yet would we seek Thine instant grace  
Thy present powers to feel,  
Grant us the shining of Thy face,  
Thyself, O Lord, reveal.

From Thy high place of purest light,  
O Lamb amidst the Throne,  
Shine forth upon our waiting sight  
And make Thy glory known.

A. S.

#### FAITH-WORK.

AS we often hear in the present day of persons undertaking work "in faith," it may be well to say a few words on what are the essential features of faith-work. Under the test of the trials and difficulties of the path, a great deal that was *thought* to be of faith has failed; but what *is* of faith cannot fail. It is backed by the omnipotence of God, on whom faith rests, and upon whom faith builds. Alas, how many there are who speak about it, yet know little of what it means! Hence the painful importunity of "urgent appeals," telling men that if *they* come not to the rescue "the work of faith" will come to the ground. Let us, then, ask ourselves, Is our faith in man or in God? in man's readiness to help on "a good cause," or in God's unfailing promise to those who trust in Him, and in Him alone?

We would mention some of the tests of the work of faith.

1st. It is a work of *obedience*. It is no self-willed service or self-appointed task. It is obedience first to a general command, and then to a personal call. To this twofold aspect of obedience we would attach great importance. Many fail because, although the work undertaken is in every way a right work, they have not received it as their own appointed work direct from God. "Go, do all that is in thine heart; for God is with thee" (2 Sam. vii. 3), Nathan said to David. And what more natural! But David was not the man to build the house for God, neither was that the time.

2nd. It is a work of *patient waiting*. When we know a thing is right in itself, and our heart moves us to undertake it, nothing is perhaps harder than quietly to wait on God in earnest, persistent prayer for days, or months, or years, till He makes it plain that it is our work. Patience at the commencement in dealing alone with God is a grand test of having patience to carry on what in patient waiting has been begun. The soul becomes habituated to deal with God and to wait.

3rd. It is a work of *trust*. The work has been taken individually from the hand of God as a personal command, and then, as he who undertakes it does so as an agent, and not as a master, he has no sense of responsibility, save that of faithful service, whether liabilities be small or great; hence he is always in peace, for he knows Him on whom he trusts. He goes not to war at his own charges; He is a servant. This

makes the yoke easy and the burden light. As God tests our obedience, so He tests our trust, as He did Israel's in the wilderness, wherein they ever failed saying, "Can He?" "Will He?" Well may we ponder over Ps. lxxxviii. 7, 8, 17-19, 22, 32, 40-42, 56, 57; also cvi. 13, 24, 25.

4th. It is a work of *trial*; i.e., of proving. God brings everything to the test; and especially is this true of faith. Abraham believed God, and God put his faith to the test; first in waiting long for Isaac, and then in commanding him to offer Him up. But Abraham staggered not through unbelief. He had waited for Isaac, and his waiting-lesson had taught him so much of God, that he could contemplate Isaac dead and burnt on the altar and yet not mistrust the *power* and *purpose* of God to bring him back from the dead, "whence also he received him in figure". Alas! how many seek at the hand of an Egyptian, as Abraham did from Hagar, that which can alone be rightly expected in the path of faith. They then bring Ishmael into the house, a deeply significant episode in Abraham's life, which illustrates the working of the flesh, of law, and of bondage in the pathway of the life or work of faith; but Faith will hear the stern command, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son".

Much more might be added on this deeply important subject by which to test our ways; but may all that is not of faith in the living God cease to call itself "a work of faith," and may those who undertake work for God sit down and fully count the cost. If they have wherewithal to meet its claims, and have the Lord's approval, let them go forward; if they have not the wherewithal, but can trust the Lord of all for all that "the tower" will cost (Luke xiv. 28), let them go forward; if they have neither the one nor the other, let them take heed how they trust in the popularity of a cause, and in the goodwill of their fellow-Christians, lest it prove a reed of Egypt, that pierces the hand that leans on it. Let not such work, however right in itself, be termed faith-work; for it is not.

The Bible teaches us the reality of God; and faith is a reality when it lays hold of Him in the line of obedience and of promise. All else is presumption; for it is not based on the *written Word*, received in the *power* of the life-giving Spirit. How many vainly take up David's sling and stone, as David might have put on Saul's armour! They have not proved them, and therefore the sling and stone fail in their hands, as the sword of Saul would have failed in David's. David went forth with a sling and a stone "in the Name of the Lord God of Israel," and that Name was a strong tower. God failed him not when he ran to meet Goliath. This is faith-work.

### THE ANOINTING OF THE LORD JESUS.

HOW much readier we are to find out truth, than when it is found out; to sit down and enjoy it in communion with the Lord. This is sad and rebuking, when we think on it. And there are some truths, that to know them, without enjoying them, is very especially thus humbly and condemning. Of this character, I feel that which I am now meditating on to be. And I have been asking my soul how much of joy in it I know; and indeed it is miserably little. May the Lord, by the Spirit, greatly enlarge our little stock.

I am thinking on *God's value* and *our value* of *Jesus*. The anointing, whether of a priest, or a king, was God's putting him into office, and endowing him with certain virtues or attributes in the Spirit, for the place He had called him to fill. It was his formal consecration, expressive, too, of the value which God then put into him. (See Ex. xxix., Lev. ix., 1 Sam. xvi. 13, 2 Kings ix. 6.) Two anointings, or endowments by the Spirit—of the Lord Jesus, are looked at by Isaiah—one for His ministry of *grace*, and one for His ministry of *glory*, or the kingdom. (Isaiah lxi.) He received the first, for the ends of His first advent (Luke iv. 18), He will receive the second, for the ends of His second advent (Ps. lxxxix. 20-29.) Thus the anointing forms, symbolically, what is in Christ. It is His *name*. "Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth." It is *Himself*. It is what God has appointed Him to do or to hold, and His endowments for such service and honours. It is what God has made Him, to act for us. Accordingly when we, in our way, anoint Him, it is an expression of our sense of all this value—of what He is to us, and has for us. We cannot put anything into Him. That is God's anointing, God has put all into Jesus. But we can, by faith, have a sense of what is in Him—we can value the value God has put in and on Him. And, when we do so, we, in our way anoint Him also. Thus in Ps. xlv., His garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia, shed on him out of *our* ivory palaces, or boxes of perfume (verse 8) and the two women anoint Him, in like manner, expressing their sense of His value (Luke vii. Matt. xxvi.) The offering of the wise men was a kind of anointing—They offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh, which like anointing was the expression of their value for Him, as king of the Jews—of the glory which then lay in that babe of Bethlehem, and they present the

tribute of subjects to Him. We thus attain, I judge, a simple scriptural account of God's anointing of Jesus, and our anointing of Him. The one is the expression of the divine consecration of, and putting of value in Christ; the other is the expression of the poor sinner's or saint's sense of that office and value that is in Him. But easier is it thus to search out the meaning of the thing, than when disclosed, to look at it,—to turn it over before the eye of the soul,—to let it find its way among the affections of the soul, and work there increased power of communion with God. This, beloved, is the humbling result of many of my meditations at any rate. I will not involve you or others in such result, if you are not conscious of being in it yourself but I suppose you will take your place with me, there. But I have not quite done with this. In connection with it, I want to look at the two anointings which we get in the New Testament. (Luke vii.) This is a lovely and affecting scene, having, as I judge, its own peculiar character. It is a sinner's value of Jesus,—a sinner's sense of what is in Him, suited to a sinner's need. As I observed before, God put value into Christ, for the ministry of *grace* (Isa. lxi., Luke iv.) for a ministry that came full of love to sinners. There was an anointing of the Spirit upon Him for that ministry, and that anointing spread itself abroad, or discovered itself as He walked here. Faith discerned it and used it—faith enjoyed it and the soul was awakened to those affections which answered it, or to the sense of the value of it; and in its time and way, brought its anointing also. And this act of the poor sinner here, was expressive of her awakened affections towards Jesus, or of her new sense, through faith, of His value to her, as a sinner. Accordingly tears and kisses were mingled with the perfume—it was because “she loved much”; that is the Lord's interpretation of her ointment and her tears. It was a sinner's sense of Jesus' value, awakening of course deep and gracious affections, affections which made her careless about the reproaches of the world. They said she was a sinner—her act said the same, and thus she could bear their words.

Matt. xxvi. This is an anointing of another kind. It is a *believer's* sense of the value that is in Jesus, as heir of all glories “in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial”—this is the Lord's commentary upon it. Faith in this woman was intelligent of the Lord's glories—that the resurrec-

tion would preserve His body, and that it would not need the sweet odours and spices which king Asa's did (2 Chron. xvi.) and which the loving but ignorant women afterwards prepared (Mark xvi. 1) Her faith apprehended the glories which, through death, He was to earn—she greeted Him out of her ivory palace as the anointed and glorious Prophet and Priest—she knew He was to reach *glories*, and not *corruption* through His obedience unto death—she poured her oil on His head—no tears were mingled with it, for it was not the expression of a sinner's love, but rather of a saint's joy. It was the expression of the *intelligence* rather than that of the *tenderness* of faith. She anointed the *feet* as well as the *head* as we find in John xii., for her faith conceived the mystery of the oneness of Christ and His saints—He the head, they the members of the one body that is to be consecrated and put into glorious office and ministry by and bye. The *King* was now sitting at his table, and faith's spikenard sent forth its pleasant smell. (Canticles i. 12.) The *Saviour* had sat before in Luke vii and tears and kisses mingled with the ointment then.

J. G. B. *Extract from a Letter.*

### EPAPHRAS.

COL. iv. 12.

THERE is a very striking difference between the inspired records of the people of God, and all human biographies. The former may, truly, be said to be, “*much in little*”; while many of the latter may, as truly, be said to be, “*little in much*”. The history of one of the Old Testament saints—a history stretching over a period of 365 years, is summed up in two short clauses. “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him,” (Gen. v. 24). How brief! But yet how full! how comprehensive! How many volumes would man have filled with the records of such a life? And yet, what more could we have said? To walk with God, comprehends all that could possibly be said of any one. And man may travel round the globe; he may preach the gospel in every clime; he may suffer in the cause of Christ; he may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick; he may read, write, print and publish; in short, he may do all that man ever could or did do; and yet, it may all be summed up in that brief clause, “he walked with God”. And right well

will it be for him, if it can be so summed up. One may do nearly all that has been enumerated, and yet never walk with God, one hour, yea, he may not even know the meaning of a walk with God. The thought of this is deeply solemnising and practical. It should lead us to the earnest cultivation of the hidden life, without which the most showy services will prove to be but mere flash and smoke.

There is something peculiarly touching in the mode in which the name of Epaphras is introduced to our notice in the New Testament. The allusions to him are very brief but very pithy. He seems to have been the very stamp of man which is so much needed at the present moment. His labours, so far as the inspired penman has recorded them, do not seem to have been very showy or attractive. They were not calculated to meet the human eye or elicit human praise. But oh! they were most precious labours—peerless—priceless labours. They were the labours of the closet, labours within the closed door, labours in the sanctuary, labours without which all beside must prove barren and worthless. He is not placed before us by the sacred biographer as a powerful preacher, a laborious writer, a great traveller, which he may have been, and which are all truly valuable in their place. The Holy Ghost, however, has not told us that Epaphras was any one of the three; but He has placed this singularly interesting character before us, in a manner calculated to stir the very depths of our moral and spiritual being. He has presented him to us as *a man of prayer*—earnest, fervent, agonising prayer—prayer, not for himself, but for others. Let us hearken to the inspired testimony.

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently (agonising) for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.” (Col. iv. 12, 13.) Such was Epaphras! Would there were hundreds like him in this our day! We are thankful for preachers, thankful for writers, thankful for travellers in the cause of Christ; but we want men of prayer, men of the closet, men like Epaphras. We are happy to see men on their feet, preaching Christ; happy to see them able to ply the pen of a ready writer, in the noble cause; happy to see them making their way, in the true evangelistic spirit, into “the regions beyond”; happy to see

them, in the true pastoral spirit going, again and again, to visit their brethren in every city. God forbid we should undervalue or speak disparagingly of such honourable services; yea, we prize them more highly than words could convey. But then at the back of all, we want a spirit of prayer—fervent, agonising persevering prayer. Without this nothing can prosper. A prayerless man is a sapless man. A prayerless preacher is a profitless preacher. A prayerless writer will send forth barren pages. A prayerless evangelist will do but little good. A prayerless pastor will have but little food for the flock. We want men of prayer—men like Epaphras—men whose closet walls witness their agonising labours. These are unquestionably the men for the present moment.

There are immense advantages attending upon the labours of the closet—advantages quite peculiar—advantages for those who engage in them, and advantages for those who are the subject of them. They are quiet unobtrusive labours. They are carried on in retirement in the hallowed soul-subduing solitude of the divine presence, outside the range of mortal vision. How little would the Colossians have known of the loving earnest labours of Epaphras, had the Holy Ghost not mentioned them. It is possible that some of them might have deemed him deficient in zealous care on their behalf. It is probable that there were persons then as there are those now, who would measure a man's care or sympathy by his visits or letters. This would be a false standard. They should see them on his knees, to know the amount of his care and sympathy. A love of travel *might* take me from London to Edinburgh to visit the brethren. A love of scribbling might lead me to write letters by every mail. Nought save a love for souls, a love for Christ, could ever lead me to agonize as Epaphras did, on behalf of the people of God, “that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God”.

Again, the precious labours of the closet demand no special gift, no peculiar talents, no pre-eminent mental endowments. Every Christian can engage in them. A man may not have the ability to preach, teach, write or travel, but every man can pray. One, sometimes, hears of a *gift* of prayer. It is not a pleasant expression. It falls gratingly on the ear. It often means a more fluent utterance of certain known truths which the memory retains, and the lips give forth. This is poor work to be at. This was not the way with Epaphras. This is not what we want and long for just

now. We want a real *spirit* of prayer. We want a spirit that enters into the present need of the Church, and bears that need in persevering, fervent, believing intercession, before the throne of grace. This spirit may be exercised, at all times, and under all circumstances. Morning, noon, eventide, or midnight, will answer for the closet labourer. The heart can spring upward to the throne in prayer and supplication at any time. Our Father's ear is ever open; His presence chamber is ever accessible. Come when or with what we may, He is always ready to hear, ready to answer. He is the hearer, the answerer, and the lover of importunate prayer. There are no accents He likes better than, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me". He himself has said, "ask—seek—knock"; "men ought *always* to pray, and not to faint"; "all things whatsoever ye shall ask, in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"—"If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God". These words are of universal application. They are intended for all God's children. The feeblest child of God can pray, can watch, can get an answer, and return thanks.

Furthermore, nothing is so calculated to give one a deep interest in people as the habit of praying constantly for them. Epaphras would be intensely interested in the Christians at Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. His interest made him pray, and his prayers made him interested. The more we are interested for any one, the more we shall pray for him, and the more we pray the more interested we become. Whenever we are drawn out in prayer for people, we are sure to rejoice in their growth and prosperity. So also in reference to the unconverted. When we are led to wait on God about them, their conversion is looked for with the deepest anxiety, and hailed, when it comes, with unfeigned thankfulness. The thought of this should stir us up to imitate Epaphras, on whom the Holy Ghost hath bestowed the honourable epithet of "a servant of Christ," in connection with his fervent prayers for the people of God.

Finally, the highest inducement that can be presented to cultivate the spirit of Epaphras is the fact of its being so directly in unison with the spirit of Christ. This is the most elevated motive. Christ is engaged in behalf of His people. He desires that they should "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"; and those who are led forth in prayer, in reference to this object, are privileged to enjoy high communion

with the great Intercessor. How marvellous that poor feeble creatures, down here, should be permitted to pray about that which engages the thoughts and interests of the Lord of glory! What a powerful link there was between the heart of Epaphras and the heart of Christ, when the former was labouring fervently for his brethren at Colosse!

Christian reader, let us ponder the example of Epaphras. Let us imitate it. Let us fix our eye upon some Colosse or other, and labour fervently in prayer for the Christians therein. The present is a deeply solemn moment. A correspondent in ——— makes the following most impressive statement:—"Matters are coming to a crisis; and men are taking sides; and it is all well. We are no longer left in doubt as to who will serve the Lord, and who will not. May the Lord break up His own way into the hearts of many, and prepare His people for suffering and doing His holy will." These are true sayings, and they tend to make us feel our urgent need of men like Epaphras. Men who are willing to labour on their knees, for the cause of Christ, or to wear, if it should be so, the noble bonds of the gospel. Such was Epaphras. The first notice we have of him is as a man of prayer, (Col. iv. 12;) and the last notice of him is as a companion in bonds with the devoted apostle of the Gentiles. (Phil. 23.)

May the Lord stir up amongst us a spirit of earnest prayer and intercession. May He raise up many of those who shall be cast in the same spiritual mould as Epaphras. These are the men for the crisis.

#### IN MEMORIAM.

OUR beloved brother in the Lord, James Cheyne, who laboured in the Gospel for many years, chiefly in Aberdeen, Ayr, Banff, and Morayshire, fell asleep in Jesus on Lord's-day morning, 30th June, at 36 Moss Street, Elgin, while staying there with a view to recruit his health.

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### JEHOSHAPHAT.

II CHRON. XVIII.

(Continued from page 131.)

THE visit of Jehoshaphat to Ahab afforded an excellent opportunity for the further development of Satan's scheme for ensnaring the servant of Jehovah.

With consummate ability and with experience of the weakness of humanity gathered during thousands of years, the arch enemy plots the overthrow of every faithful witness, the subversion of every true testimony for God that ever appears on the earth.

Scripture is filled with warnings as to his "Subtlety," his "snares," his "wiles," his "devices," the "cunning craftiness," of his human instruments whereby they "lie in wait" to deceive, and such an inspired record as this of Jehoshaphat's life is given for the very purpose of forewarning the children of God, so that they may not be ignorant of His devices.

Being Ahab's guest, and receiving at his hands such courteous treatment, how could Jehoshaphat refuse without violating every claim of friendship, to aid him in his proposed expedition against the Syrians? Who does not know how hard it is even to appear unfriendly after having accepted of kind and even costly hospitality? Moreover Ahab's proposal was seemingly directed to the obtaining of a right and proper object. Ramoth Gilead, one of the cities of refuge given to Israel by the hand of Joshua, and pertaining to the tribe of Gad (Josh. xx. 8); was now in the hands of the Syrians. Three years had passed without any attempt on the part of Ahab to restore it to Israel, years which there had been no war between Israel and the Syrians. (1 Kings xxii. 1.)

But now he seizes his opportunity to secure the help of Judah's King and Judah's forces, hoping thereby to obtain a great victory and to restore Ramoth to Israel. Jehoshaphat readily consented; and not only so, he even condescended, so far was he in bondage to the rules of kingly etiquette, to deny any difference that existed between them—between the two tribes that adhered to God's order of worship, and the ten that had apostatized saying, "I am as thou art and my people as thy people: and we will be with thee in the war".

But it was a hasty promise. God had not been consulted, surrounding circumstances determined the answer; to offend his munificent host was an impossibility to the courtly Jehoshaphat, hence truth is compromised if not sacrificed and a pledge given which was soon to bear bitter fruit.

And are not such circumstances matters of every day occurrence in the experience of Christians. Like mariners that have drifted far from their course, in vain they consult their chart; it was not contemplated that they should go so far astray and the region they are sailing in is not marked down. They are "walking in darkness," and know not whither they are going, they seem to be outside the sphere of God's instructions. Scripture gives no directions for the circumstances they are in for it does not contemplate a child of God being there.

Blessed be God, even then He does not desert His own elect, but commonly by the dealings of His providence which ever waits upon the counsels of His grace, He drives the wanderer, weary and broken-hearted back to his starting point, there humbled and self-judged to know the grace that prevents and restores.

Jehoshaphat's pledge of help to Ahab had not long been given until conscience began to work, and the man of God began to feel the deep uneasiness known only to those who have experienced such an awakening from soul-slumber, to find that their feet are already in the net; that they have fallen into the snare laid for them by the Wicked one.

"And Jehoshaphat said unto the King of Israel, 'Inquire I pray thee at the Word of the Lord to-day.'" A strange proposal to make to one who had all his life systematically set aside and violated the Word of the Lord.

Better had it been for Jehoshaphat to have enquired himself ere he gave his consent, but in the haste and energy of his own perverse will, he could not wait on the Lord.

It is not until the heart has learned to say "Lord what wilt THOU have me to do?" that there can be any real waiting on God for the knowledge of His will.

Often is the prayer uttered "teach me THY way O Lord," when the deceitful heart has purposed, or it may be *pledged itself* to ITS OWN way. Thus is the Spirit grieved and the conscience defiled and "the backslider in heart" goes on to the bitter punishment of being "filled with his own ways".

Ahab readily consented to this most reasonable request. The veriest worlding can be religious when it suits his own purpose. If the child of God will withdraw his testimony to be friends with the world, the world will also assume "a form of godliness" in order not to scandalize the believer.

No less than FOUR HUNDRED PROPHETS speedily respond to the call of Ahab.

Whoever they were, they understood that it was their business to speak that which should gratify the King of Israel. It is significant that in verses 21 and 22 they are called Ahab's prophets. A prophet of Jehovah could never be so named. Moreover, as it became evident, they were "false prophets," incurring the awful curse of those who dare to speak in Jehovah's name that which He has not spoken. (Ezek. xiii. Jer. xxix. 23.) This peculiar form of iniquity may be less conspicuous in modern times. Most men are too keenly alive to the damage their reputation would receive, through the non-fulfilment of a prediction, to hazard anything very definite in this way. But abundantly is there to be found on every hand the species of

counterfeit, against which the scriptures that depict the apostacy of the present age, give special warning. "But there were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be FALSE TEACHERS among you who privily shall bring in damnable heresis," (2 Pet. ii. 1.)

It is written in Eph. iv., that the Lord Jesus as the ascended Head of the body the church, received and bestowed gifts for the edification of the same amongst which are "pastors and teachers". Such an one was Timothy, a pastor indeed, though comparatively young in years, a teacher well acquainted with the Scriptures and one who also did the work of an Evangelist. He is exhorted to "*preach the word*" "in season, out of season";—and why? "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Tim. iv. 1-4.)

And in very truth the doctrines of God's Word are not palatable to carnal minds. Little is it to be wondered at that those who have but the "form of godliness," should turn away from the teaching that is of God, and from the teachers that are Christ's gifts to His church, and find teachers for themselves who will always cater like Ahab's prophets to the itching ears of those whose servants they are, and corrupt and mangle the glorious truth of God and leaven it with lies until it loses all power, over the consciences of men, and leaves them to sleep undisturbed the sleep of death.

For those who can with greatest plausibility explain away the truths of christianity that are most obnoxious to the carnal mind, the highest premium will be paid. The popular teacher of the Nineteenth century is he who denies the necessity of regeneration, maintaining that human nature is good and requires only to be educated; that "atonement by blood" is a doctrine borrowed from "the bloody shambles of heathendom," that everlasting punishment is a horror of the dark ages, not for a moment to be named in view of the more modern light as to the mercy of God; that separation from the world, confession of the name of Jesus, and personal effort to waken and save the ungodly, is "asceticism" and "cant"!

These and a multitude of other soul-deluding doctrines are rapidly becoming the *sine qua non* of pe-

pularity, especially among the educated and influential of society. And such damnable heresies are eating like a canker into the minds even of true believers; one after another who for a time ran well is falling before the torrent of error, and making shipwreck of the faith, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity". (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

Jehoshaphat did not recognize the "Shepherd of Israel's" voice in the oracular response of Ahab's four hundred. In his inmost soul he knew they were Ahab's prophets and not THE LORD'S. Therefore he asks "is there not a prophet of Jehovah besides that we might enquire of him?" Alas! for poor Jehoshaphat! How his heart now thirsts for the true testimony of God; yet politeness forbids him to say that these were not Jehovah's prophets, therefore he delicately covers his conviction with the word "*besides*".

To have plainly declared that these were NOT servants of the Lord would have "*given offence*," but to ask for *yet another*, like many another compromise, smoothed the way and hid the truth.

There was indeed another; Michaiah the son of Imla; but as Ahab frankly confessed "I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me but always evil". Evidently Jehoshaphat had some knowledge of Michaiah; hence the faint rebuke "let not the King say so".

And are there not still those who are hated by the false teachers and rulers of christendom because they testify of this age of boasting and self-sufficiency, that its end is destruction; that schemes for producing a paradise on earth, whether religious or educational, social or scientific, commercial or political, must surely end in "confusion worse confounded". True, they are in a small minority, but having the Word of the Lord for what they testify, they can afford to be bold as lions. Nor was there wanting to Jehovah's faithful servant, the kindly meant though evil advice. "Let thy word therefore I pray thee be like one of theirs and speak thou good." As much as to say, "now that you are to have one other opportunity of publicly declaring the Word of the Lord, don't persist in running counter to popular opinion; for once, refrain from marring the harmony of the august occasion". But Michaiah had no mind to sacrifice faithfulness for popularity or to forbear declaring the whole counsel of God be it ever

so unpalatable. Like the Apostle Paul in later times, his boast was "I have kept nothing back that was profitable for you". (Acts xx. 20-27.)

Open doors for testimony are indeed to be valued; large audiences and a wide sphere of usefulness are not to be despised by the evangelist and the teacher; but he who obtains these through even an implied, if not an expressed, compact to keep back any part of the testimony of God, be it "baptism," or "the Lord's Supper," or "separation from the world," or "the coming of the Lord," will be tested at the judgment seat of Christ. Then it will be found that not apparent success but FAITHFULNESS wins the prize. "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he *not crowned*, except he strive lawfully." (2 Tim. ii. 5.) The door that Christ opens "*no man can shut*". (Rev. iii. 8.) The door that is closed because of His word cannot be one which He has opened.

Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, seems to have been the most prominent amongst Ahab's prophets. Cunningly he simulates the manner of Jehovah's messengers, makes him "horns of iron," and with these declares the prosperity of Ahab and the destruction of Syria. Before the two kings, each on his throne at the gate of Samaria, prophesy the four hundred. At last comes Michaiah, and, probably in a sort of divine irony such as Elijah used towards the prophets of Baal, he at first chimes in with the rest. There must have been something in his manner or tone that told them this was not his real message, and Ahab, with assumed zeal for the knowledge of God's will—assumed for the occasion to secure the confidence of Jehoshaphat—exclaims' "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou speak nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord".

Then broke forth Jehovah's burden from the lips of His faithful servant,—a prophecy remarkable in the extreme for the almost unparalleled way in which it withdraws the veil from the courts of heaven, and opens the secrets of the workings of the powers of darkness and the permission given them by the Lord.

To enter upon the details of such a prophecy is beyond the limits of a paper like this; but in passing, it may be well to direct attention to some of the lessons to be learned from it.

1st. How completely Ahab, the apostate, was instigated by Satan to his own destruction, though he doubtless imagined he was entering upon a righteous warfare.

2nd. What apt tools for Satan to work by are the prophets who prophecy lies. He can fill their mouths with lying words at his own pleasure. (Compare 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2.)

3rd. How terrible the fact that *God permits* Satan thus to lead captive at his will his own dupes; nevertheless, comparing this with Job ii. 6, it is comforting to see that his power for mischief is limited by a mightier than he.

The prophecy of Michaiah, as the unvarnished truth always does, drew forth the ire of Ahab, who ordered him at once to prison, and the impudence of Zedekiah, who smote him upon the cheek.

But, well though Jehoshaphat knew that this was the true word of the Lord, he was now so thoroughly in the snare of the devil that he could neither rebuke the king nor the false prophet.

Like "an ox to the slaughter or a fool to the correction of the stocks" (Prov. vii. 22), so poor Jehoshaphat, despite the warning voice of God and the mutterings of a troubled conscience, sets out in league with ungodly Ahab upon his disastrous enterprise.

J. R. C.

(To be continued.)

### THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN.

SEEING there are many who want to know clearly what godly women may do in serving the Lord, and seeing that many have run into extremes in the matter, let us quietly consider both from direct Scripture statement and from analogy what a Christian woman's position is in the present dispensation.

First, let us see what God desireth of her personally.

"That women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety: not with broidered hair, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

"The aged women . . . that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their

husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed."

That "the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully, for some are already turned aside unto Satan".

Of widows: "She that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day".

Of wives of deacons, that they "be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things". And, by inference, of the unmarried, that they follow the precepts laid down for the elder and younger women according to their age and circumstances.

Of children, that they "obey their parents in the Lord, for this is right".

Now, when we consider that, from the beginning of the present dispensation, many women have been associated together with men as fellow-heirs of the kingdom and members of the body of Christ, the Church, we naturally enquire what portion of the great business assigned to the Church at large, is assigned to those women who form, at any given time, a portion of that Church? Doth Scripture warrant any to say that women have not equal right to share in the work of the Church? Is it not written, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 28.) Scripture assigneth each their own peculiar portion, as we shall presently see, but this Scripture speaketh not of woman's equality to minister, nor of ministering at all, but of the merging of every national, individual, and personal distinction in Christ as being a new creation in Him, so that one no longer glories in his or her former estate, as being "Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female," but as being newly created (and co-linked with every believer) in Christ Jesus.

Ah, but some will say—How, seeing that we are "members of the same body," can any deny to women the right to act as a member of that one body?

We answer: "All members have not the same office". If we can show from His word that unto women is office meet for them *ever* assigned, differing from that assigned to men, they can no longer complain they are treated as useless members of the body.

the confusion of the business assigned *her* that has caused, and is causing, so much trouble in the Church, not to mention the *self-will*, the *vanity*, which have urged many to *omit* His revealed counsel concerning the matter; confusion has been increased by the part many *assumed* towards the question, who have been by their personal feelings rather than by faith *in* the written word.

When we carefully consider the injunctions, above-given in Scripture concerning the personal *life* and conduct of women, we see that the *which* gave rise to such injunctions being given, which, if unrestrained, would create fearful trouble to the Church; and God, knowing Satan's aim, *never*, ever to deceive and seduce the man from obedience and fealty to Himself, caused to be *words* which cut at the root of woman's fleshly *natural* desire, and which, if obeyed, not only *make* woman meek and lowly spiritually, but hinder her being a snare and a temptation

When we conclude that the less noticeable *among* men,—the more closely followed the *commandments* and other Scripture precepts, the less will *be* likelihood of offences arising which are hateful to God. Oh, the depth of His wisdom in this matter! *But* for the young and uninstructed to believe *that*, yet how blessed they who do! Let us be *aware* of this, that Satan's wiles may not overcome us; *Remember* that the more closely "veiled" the *woman* is, the more shall be her power to witness for God. *This* leads to the consideration of the words in *1 Cor. xi. 16*, where the woman is enjoined to be veiled *in the assembly*, and otherwise.

*This* refers, as some think, merely to the Eastern custom of all modest women appearing veiled? or does it refer to Christian women when praying, &c., to themselves?

The *reason* of the passage is that woman has a natural *head* "is given her for a covering," that seeing *that* she is provided with a veil, she should therefore *not* be *obtruded* before men, and should, especially when *in* the presence of God, not obtrude herself or her natural *beauty* before men, but remain veiled, positively *with* a veil, or otherwise *unnoticeable*, lest she *become* a snare and a snare, and unwittingly assume *authority* with the man, who is her "head". (63.)

"Now for this cause ought the woman to have a covering on her head in sign that she is under the power of the man, because of the angels." (V. 10, margin.)

That in the earlier days of the Church women prophesied and prayed is clear from verses 5-13 and Acts xxi. 8, 9, linked with Acts ii. 17. From 1 Cor. xi. 1-16 we may infer it was at least before men, if not publicly or even in the assembly. Was this peculiar and temporary, or meant to be permanent?

That the prophesying here spoken of was for a temporary purpose only and not intended to be perpetuated in the Church may be inferred from the following reasons:—

(1) That in Acts ii. 16-21, where the prophecy of Joel is quoted, the time alluded to was special and the promise conditional. Like the case of John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elias, and would have served as Elias if *they had received Him*; so here, if the nation had received the testimony of the Holy Ghost through the early Church, and marked the extraordinary signs wherewith, in fulfilment of Scripture, He was working, using even young men and young women to prophecy, then would the whole of the word spoken by Joel have been fulfilled and the great and notable day of the Lord have come. But the nation rejected the testimony and operation of the Holy Ghost, and so God held in abeyance the fulfilment of His promise in Joel, caused these extraordinary usages gradually to cease, and replaced the oral by the written word.

(2.) We see that prophecy taken in its primary aspect, *i.e.*, foretelling or announcing the unknown will of God, has of necessity ceased, seeing that God has given us the revelation of His mind as fully as He sees fit, and has closed the book, so that it were presumption for any now to say, "I can prophecy". (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) Seeing also that, until the canon of Scripture was closed, it was needful to speak "to exhortation, edification and comfort," they who prophesied thus spake, because unfolders of the mind and desire of God to the infant Church, and as encouragers of those who had not the written word of the New Testament whereon to base their hope.

(3.) That prophecy having ceased, "teachers" (Ephes. iv. 11) now fulfil the office of instructors in the word to the Church. (ver. 12.) It is therefore clear that though specially and for a set purpose, which was temporarily frustrated by unbelief, women did prophecy in the early Church for a sign, yet now they,

(or even men,) can no longer prophecy. Nor can they become "teachers," for it is written expressly, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence". (1 Tim. ii. 11.) And again: "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will (*i.e.*, wish to know) learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for *it is a shame* to women to speak in the Church."

And should any assert they are constrained to speak in the Church, that they dare not be silent but must unburden themselves, to such we would say: "What! came the Word of God *out from you*, or came it unto you only?" Hath He who hath set the members in the body as it hath pleased Him, who has given to every one grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ—hath He not said to you, "Keep silence in the Church," "learn in silence in all subjection," "I suffer not a woman to teach"? Hath He burdened your spirit to utter forth its message? Hath He made *you* an exception to His own declared counsel concerning women. Therefore we conclude that *in the assembly* silence is imposed on women and that for the wisest reasons; not only because of their inability to teach—for unto them is the "gift not given," as above shown—but also because contravention of God's law would take place, and the woman would usurp authority over the man (the wife also over the husband), and also because it would open the door to woman's taking a forward place instead of being modest and veiled, and cause Satan to have the advantage in using the woman to manage the man, and cause him to worship the creature and forget his fealty to the Creator.

Further, I would say to any who are disposed through false counsel to argue that the words used in 1 Cor. xi. 34, 35, about women "speaking" are wrongly translated, and only mean a prohibition against "whispering" or "chattering," that the word there used, *λαλεω* in the Greek, is used nearly 300 times in the New Testament and never once in the sense of "chattering" or "whispering nonsense," and that, though the word may be used in this sense lawfully in other books, it is *never once so used in inspired Scriptures*, and this should be proof enough as to its right use in the passage before us.

Yet now—*Why*, some will say, may not a woman teach in the assembly? The answer is given in 1 Tim.

ii: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence". For Adam was first formed—the man, the image and glory of God—then Eve, the glory of the man. And *the head* of the woman is the man, even as the head of the man is Christ. (1 Cor. xi.) Would the man presume to teach his Head? Can the woman then think it wise to try and teach *her* head, *the man*? Moreover, "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression". And the woman, therefore, must take the subject place, and remember "her desire shall be to her husband, and *he shall* rule over her". Now, to attempt to teach one's lord, one's head, one who has both conferred, and natural lordship, is foolish, and needs no argument to show that it is wrong. Yet let the woman remember that "neither is the man without the woman nor the woman without the man in the Lord". They are as one, the one supplementing the other, the two forming one. Precious type of Christ and His Church. (See Ephes. v. 22-33.) And where the subject place is kept by women in the Church, there is understood "this mystery"; but where the woman asserts or claims what is not allowed, confusion of the worst sort arises. A disobedient wife causes her husband care and sorrow; a disobedient assembly causes grief to Christ: but *vice versa*, joy ariseth and is sustained by willing subject fulfilment of the husband's and of the Lord's mind.

A. O. M.

(To be continued.)

### THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT.

THE SUBSTANCE OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

READ the following Scriptures:—John vii. 38, 39. "He that believeth on Me as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Acts i. 4. "He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me; for John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

The fulfilment of this is recorded in ii. 1-4, which also read: and then the Apostle's explanation of it all in ver. 32. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof

we all are witnesses, therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

John xiv. 16. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth."

You notice that in this verse the Lord Jesus puts Himself in the position of one who is asking a gift from the Father for His disciples. He already had the Father's promise. So it is written, "He that believeth on Me, *as the Scripture hath said*," the allusion here doubtless being to the Old Testament Scriptures, such as Isaiah xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28, &c., where promises are made which the Lord Jesus knew must be fulfilled. But the fulfilment of this promise could not take place until the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus had been finished, and God's entire approval of that work testified by the exaltation and glorifying of His Son at His own right hand. So in Psalm lxxviii. we read (ver. 18), "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts for men; yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them".

That this is addressed to Christ, and refers to His resurrection and ascension is unquestionable, seeing it is quoted as such in Ephesians iv.

It is Christ that spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them. It is He that has received gifts for the rebellious, and being even for such, the gift from the throne, where He is seated, comes first to the headquarters of rebellion, even to Jerusalem, to the very city that a few days before had re-echoed the cry "away with Him, away with Him". The object of this was "that the Lord God might dwell among them". That is Jehovah God—God in covenant relationship—that He might have an abiding dwelling-place with His people.

I think these Scriptures which we have read show clearly that upon the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus, God was pleased to prepare a great and unprecedented blessing for His people in the world. I want you to notice that the like had not taken place before. What was it?

God by His Holy Spirit came down and constituted redeemed sinners His dwelling-place; calling their

bodies His temple. (1 Cor. vi. 19.) The like of this was never heard of before.

Man, in the hour of his triumph, might choose to do some cruel work, but God, in the hour of Christ's triumph, did a mighty work of grace. It was just like God to do a stupendous act of grace upon the completion of the work of Christ and thus testify His approval of that work, and the value He sets upon it. Therefore the Holy Ghost is shed upon redeemed sinners. By Him they are sealed, and given the earnest of their heavenly inheritance, they are linked up as members of one body with Christ the glorified Head and made a Temple for God to dwell in, and not only so, immediately upon the death of Christ, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, a significant act on God's part, declaring that the way into the Holiest of all, till then not made manifest, was at length opened up, so that the vilest of Adam's race could draw near, even to the very throne of God's immediate presence.

Such was the marvellous response given by infinite grace to the crowning act of human enmity, the murder of the Son of God.

Thus we see that, in two ways, both alike expressive of perfect grace, God has signalized the accomplishment of the work of redemption.

God draws nearer than ever before to man, taking possession of humanity as His temple, and He also draws man nearer than ever to Himself, working out the fulfilment of the gracious purpose of His heart, to have *no distance* between Himself and His people, to have them even as near to Him as His Son, and loved with the same love, so near in Christ that no figure could represent the union but that of the Head and the members of one body.

God has set such a value upon the work of His Son that He has taken rebel sinners, the vilest of the vile, brought them even to His very heart, sent His Holy Spirit to dwell within them, and this He has done in righteousness that cannot be challenged and to His own eternal glory, all on the ground of the work of redemption accomplished by His Son on Calvary.

Turn now to Lev. xiv. and we shall see this illustrated in one of the beautiful types or shadows of the Old Testament.

Oil is the figure chiefly used to represent the Holy Spirit of God. Hence the term "anoint," being used in connection with the Spirit, (See 1 John ii. 27, also "Unction" verse 20. See also Acts x. 38, &c.)

Anointing was familiar to Old Testament believers. The king was anointed, so Saul and David were anointed by Samuel. The priests also were anointed as part of their consecration service. The word "Messiah" is just the Hebrew for anointed, even as the word "Christ" is the Greek for the same. These titles of the Lord would at once convey to the mind of a believing Jew the thought that Jesus was God's anointed priest and king. And wherever we find anointing with oil, or even oil itself referred to, we may be almost confident that there is some typical allusion to the Holy Spirit.

So in Lev. xiv., the chapter that contains the ceremonial law respecting the cleansing of a leper, we find that there was first the application of the blood, and afterwards the oil. Verse 14, "And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot". Thus the blood is applied, its value is put upon the leper, then follows "And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour it into the palm of his own left hand, and the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand and shall sprinkle of the oil with his finger seven times before the Lord, and of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand and upon the great toe of his right foot, *upon the blood of the trespass offering*".

Thus the oil comes from the hand of the priest to the blood-sprinkled leper, just as the Lord Jesus the Great High Priest having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, first received from the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then poured out that gift upon those whom He had washed from their sins in His own blood. So it is written, "ye have an unction *from the Holy One*".

I want you specially to notice that the oil was put upon the blood. It is in virtue of the full value of the atoning death of Christ being secured to the believing sinner, that he receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was not first the oil and then the blood, but first the blood and then the oil. First the sinner is justified through faith in the blood of Christ, then being justified he is sealed with the Holy Spirit. So we read in Eph. i. 13, "in whom after that ye believed

ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise". Thus the "we," believing Jews and the "ye," believing Gentiles were made one, sealed with one Spirit, baptized by one Spirit into one body; both having priestly access by one Spirit to the Father. Being thus made one with the risen Christ, they are no longer regarded as Jews or Gentiles, all such distinctions are done away in Christ, having believed in Him, the Jew is no longer a Jew, the Gentile is no longer a Gentile, he is in the Church of God, the body of Christ, the new creation, where Christ is all in all.

Notice also that the leper could no more be received as a cleansed worshipper before Jehovah without the oil, than without the blood. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." Where the blood is, there is the oil.

Look at another illustration in Lev. viii. Here in ver. 12 we see the anointing oil poured upon the head of Aaron the High Priest, answering to the anointing in Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, as it is written "Thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows". (Ps. xlv. 7.)

But in verse 30, we read, "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron and upon his garments, and upon his sons and upon his son's garments with him".

Here the same oil that was poured without measure upon the head of Aaron the high priest is also given, though in an inferior measure, to Aaron's sons. They receive the unction from the Holy One, they are sharers of the same anointing. But here as with the leper in the day of his cleansing the oil is not separated from the blood.

Here there is not the same definiteness as to the order as there is in Lev. xiv. because, there it was the cleansing of the defiled, whereas here it is setting apart for priestly service; but there is the same inseparable connection between the two.

Whether therefore I look at myself as a leper cleansed, or as a priest consecrated for service in the sanctuary, I see that it is in either case by blood and by oil. Not by oil without the blood, nor by blood without the oil, but by both together.

"By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified *whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us.*" (Heb. x. 14, 15.)

Thus we see that the Holy Ghost is the common

heritage of God's children, "What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God." (1 Cor. vi. 19.) This is the statement of a fact, true of every saint. The possession of the Holy Ghost is no more dependent on our experience, than the forgiveness of sins. We have redemption and forgiveness, not by our feelings or experiences, but apart from these on the ground of the shed blood of Christ, even so have we the indwelling of the Spirit of God. So in 1 Cor. vi. 19, already referred to, having stated THE FACT of the believer's body being the temple of the Holy Ghost, the Apostle goes on to say "and ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price".

Thus the purchase price, even the precious blood of Christ is still kept in close connexion with the anointing, as in the type the blood is not separate from the oil.

Had you or I been writing this verse we should probably have said "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost".

But I would call your attention to this, that nowhere do we get the idea of a plurality of temples. God has but one temple. All our bodies forming part of the one great living temple, the living Spirit of God dwelling in each member. "Your bodies are the members of Christ." This union will not be severed even by death, "for He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies because of His Spirit which dwelleth in us". (Rom. viii. 11.) Yes, "bodies of our humiliation" though they be, they are precious redeemed bodies. Be careful of them, and see that they be in no wise dishonoured, for they are the members of Christ and the temple of God. "Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing that is for resurrection glory) is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit." (2 Cor. v. 5.)

I have thus been endeavouring to show from Scripture, that if a man is "justified by the blood of Christ" he is also a possessor of the Spirit of Christ. That, that Spirit dwelling in him, is the "anointing" to enlighten, the "earnest," or pledge of the coming glory and the seal by which God marks him as His, and secures him for the inheritance for which he is purchased. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed till the day of redemption." Here we need His blessed presence in all these characters, for we are in the wilderness absent from

the Lord. But by-and-bye we shall be at home. There we shall not need Him as the Comforter, for our tears shall be all wiped away, neither shall we know Him as the "Earnest," for we shall be in full possession of the inheritance. But still shall we have "for ever" His abiding presence and our communion shall never cease to be the communion of the Holy Ghost, communion with the Father and the Son.

In conclusion, we hear sometimes believers praying to God to send down His Holy Spirit. Blessed be God, He does not answer us according to the measure of our intelligence, but according to the riches of His own grace. God does not tell us to pray FOR the Holy Ghost, but to pray IN the Holy Ghost, because we have the Spirit and He dwells in us. Now, some run to extremes, and say the Holy Spirit is not in heaven but on earth, thus localizing the presence of God's Spirit. We cannot with our finite understanding comprehend what a spirit is. Therefore God helps us by the use of such a figure as anointing, or pouring forth of oil or water; to an understanding of the acting of His Spirit. The Holy Spirit links us to Christ on the throne of God. He is the fountain head of the Spirit, from whose fulness we receive the streams, the holy Unction. Thus the Apostle speaks of his being enabled to overcome through "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ". (Phil. i. 19.) This point is illustrated in 2 Kings iv. There we find a woman in trouble about debt. The prophet instructs her to borrow empty vessels, not a few. She then took the pot of oil which she possessed and poured out into the empty vessels till all were filled. Then, and not till then, the oil stayed. Thus God would teach us that there is no limit on His part to the supply of His Spirit. Our responsibility is to "be filled with the Spirit". (Eph. v. 18.) Where there are *emptied* vessels there will soon be a filling with the Spirit.

But if there be vessels filled with pride, worldliness, selfishness, envying, or strife, there can be no filling with the Spirit.

This does not mean that His Spirit ceases to dwell within us, but being grieved, His power and presence is little if at all manifested. He dwells in us to comfort us, but we won't listen to His comfort. To teach us, but He has only one theme and that is Christ, and we little care to hear about Him, and so the Spirit is grieved and His manifestation of His presence is quenched.

I believe this truth of the indwelling of the Holy

Ghost is the cardinal doctrine, the very speciality of the present age. But Satan has succeeded in thoroughly setting it aside, so that the church has for centuries been praying for the Spirit instead of owning and trusting in His presence.

And just as there is no scripture for the church praying for the Holy Ghost, so there is no instance of praise to the Holy Ghost. There is praise to God and to the Lamb, but none in Scripture to the Holy Ghost. Has God omitted to mention His Spirit in such doxologies? Certainly not, but the truth is that whether it be praise or prayer, only that is truly acceptable which is indited by the Spirit and which ascends in the power of the Spirit.

### THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

Now "the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, take eat, this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me".

"The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Christ."

**P**ARTAKERS of that one bread" we have a common source of sustenance, the Christ, of whom the bread is a type, the crucified, of whose broken body the broken bread telleth.

We eat of the broken loaf. The loaf must be broken that each may feed. "The corn of wheat," must needs fall into the ground and die, if it is to bring forth fruit—so Christ must needs suffer, and rise again from the dead, if He has to bring many sons to glory. Our eating of the broken bread sheweth forth then our faith in Christ's death, as meeting our soul's need. Each one partaking, tells forth his or her appreciation of His sacrifice, and all partaking, jointly show their common unity in the common salvation, and this God loveth, for every sacrifice of praise is a sweet savour unto Him, of the exceeding preciousness of His well-beloved, who fulfilled His will, and, at His commandment, laid down His life a propitiation for sin.

Moreover, we not only glory in our individual safety through His dying for us, but we rejoice in God, because we learn how that God is glorified in sin being put away, and also how that, effectually, He who died and is risen, will, because He has the right, subdue all things for God. Oh! 'tis a joyous thought that the once Crucified shall claim the right over all, and

eventually bring all into order and make the whole creation to cease its groaning, and this because He laid down His life and made expiation for sin.

And so as "partakers of that one bread," we celebrate the victory of our Lord, who by dying hath obtained such an excellent name. The glory of His victory is exhibited in grace to His foes now, but will be manifested in judgment hereafter, upon such of them as reject His proffered mercies. And as "one body" with Him, we shall be associated with Him in glory, though sufferers now for His name's sake, for such is His calling.

"After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

Why do we partake of the cup? "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"

Now "the life is in the blood," and His life was taken from the earth. His pouring out of His soul unto death was that propitiation for sin might be effected, and God declareth His righteousness for the remission of sins unto all, and upon all them who have faith in His blood—"My blood of the new Covenant," is His title for it—the blood of the old Covenant could never take away sins or purge the conscience, but the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, effectually removeth sins, purgeth the conscience of, and perfects for ever all those who are separated unto God.

As the blood of the passover Lamb was a warrant to those assembled within the blood-sprinkled house, to eat the feast in peace, so now to us, the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son, which cleanseth us from all sin, is warrant and title to eat of the bread, the memorial of His body, from whence the life-blood poured, given for us.

We partake then of the one cup, participants of the value of His shed blood. He died for me, He died for us, the personal, the collective cry.

The blood of the new Covenant, which God has ratified and included us in, has opened for us a way into the very holiest, into the very presence of God. It brings us to where God wanted us to be, giving us "perfect soundness" in His presence, perfect liberty to worship God, boldness to draw nigh, with thankful hearts, to praise Him.

And when we consider our former estate, our separation from God, our disinclination towards Him, and the doom that would inevitably have been our portion, does it not cause abounding gratitude, to remember, in the drinking of the cup, that all this has passed by and that we can never come into the judgment, never suffer the wrath of God, for He who drank the cup of wrath for us, hath effectually cleared us, and "who is He that condemneth" those for whom Christ died, whom God hath justified? The cup of wrath was His—the cup of blessing is ours. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? I will *take* the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord."

Let us not lose the joy of this communion. The Lord invites all His people to His table. If I am absent I must give my reasons to Him for it; He invited me, and if I don't go I must tell Him why, for He is a great King.

I go then to His table at His bidding, He has prepared the provisions, and will delight to see me eat. If I am not hungry He will feel it, and ask me why? If I don't attend to Him speaking, but am occupied with the other guests, I shall lose some special portion He wanted to give me, for He is very careful not to pass unnoticed any who come in.

And if others say, if our children say, "Why do ye thus?" Of what avail to you is the breaking of bread? We answer, "It is the *Lord's* Supper," He has bidden us come and feast with Him, and so we come together, happy at such a gracious provision being made for us. In it we are showing forth *our* Lord's death till He come again. He loves to have us thus assembled and it is a proof to the world that we are a people belonging to the Lord who died and is risen again. A waiting people, comforted by the Spirit of the Lord shed forth abundantly on them now, and living in daily hope of His return to take them away to the Home He has prepared for them in His Father's house.

A. O. M.

### —◆— "THE HIGHER LIFE."

PROMINENT among the religious movements of the day is one popularly called "The Higher Life," "Perfection," "Perfect Love," etc. From the very nature of its professed object, "the advancement of Scriptural holiness," (understanding thereby holiness of life in the believer) it claims the attention of every

renewed soul, especially of those whose earnest cry is, "more, Saviour, like Thee". Having met with some of its earnest advocates, many of whom we esteem much in the Lord, we have been led to consider their views; and after much prayer and study of the Word regard them as unscriptural. Believing that this question is troubling many of the Lord's little ones, we wish to point out the plain teaching of His Word.

One feature of the movement is *the emphasis placed upon experience*, it being by many considered unanswerable to say, "I know it to be true, because I have experienced it;" while most say they can point to the time and place they experienced the blessing. Now while we do not in any measure doubt the testimony, as to *the fact* of such experience, we certainly do object to the *interpretation* of it.

With many, that which was regarded as a second blessing was simply conversion; the trust had been in self, or works; Christ was apprehended; full salvation seen; and the soul led to rest in His work. With others, it was the *assurance* of faith; the realizing the fact of their personal salvation, from the promise of His word. With others, it was the apprehension of some great truth, which seemed to give new light and life to the soul. While some we fear, were simply self deceived. Perhaps the root of this deception was a failure to distinguish between the Spirit and His fruit; and a forgetfulness of the fact that we have to encounter "the wiles of the devil". It is an error much to be regretted, the belief that the Spirit *reports* His presence to the senses: a belief that lies at the root of much fanaticism, such as that of Irving. It is well to remember that the Spirit does not testify of Himself but Christ.

To illustrate, the Word teaches that the Comforter is given to dwell with the believer, to guide, (John xvi. 13), and teach (John xiv. 26).

In this His office work, the Spirit opens the eyes to see the things of God, and often impresses the believer, as to his duty and life: now the danger is, of regarding *all* impressions as from God, and forgetting that the flesh and the devil are both active. The spiritual Christian will bring everything, therefore, to the test of the Word, rejecting as not of the Lord, that which is contrary to its voice. So with feelings. "Joy, peace, etc.," are not the Spirit, they are only "the fruit of the Spirit," (Gal. v. 22). Nor must we suppose all

joy, all peace, is of the Spirit, for the Word plainly teaches the reverse. We must ask, does it spring from a right source? Does it rest on the Word?

So with the experience, *of itself* it is no authority as establishing a doctrine. Hence it is the Word to which we appeal, and the Word must decide in all things.

Just here, however, we would call attention to the fact that all Christians are living below, their privileges; and that all without exception are praying for more faith, more love, more of the Spirit; the expression of the heart's longing growing out of a sense of failure instinctive to all.

I. The Word plainly teaches that there are differences in the attainments of Christians; that as to their practical life here there are distinctions that can not be ignored.

Thus, for example, some Christians are weak, others strong. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." (Rom. xv. 1.) Some are established, (Acts xvi. 5); others not, (Rom. i. 11). Some would receive a reward, others suffer loss. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. iii. 14, 15.)

Again, some are "babes in Christ," (1 Pet. ii. 2); others are "young men," (1 John ii. 13); others "fathers," (1 John ii. 14). Besides these and other distinctions, there is one great one mentioned in 1 Cor. iii. 1, which is the root of all the rest, viz: carnal and spiritual, or *fleshly* and spiritual. "And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."

In the believer there are two natures, that which he receives from Adam, variously called, "the old man," (Eph. iv. 22); "sin," (Rom. vii. 17), and "the flesh," (Gal. v. 17); and that which he receives from Christ, which the word calls, "eternal life," (John iii. 36), the "new man," (Eph. iv. 24), and the "Spirit" (Gal. v. 17). Hence the appetites, affections, and desires of the old nature exist side by side with the desires, affections, and hopes of the new. This results in conflict, of which we have a picture in Romans vii.

Now a carnal Christian is one whose life, or actions are controlled by the flesh, a spiritual Christian is one who is controlled by the Spirit. No regenerated soul is entirely carnal, and none entirely spiritual, because we

are not always watching, nor are we always conscious as to the character of our motives: often they are mixed; sometimes what is begun in the Spirit is finished in the flesh, while often they are all of the flesh.

In the passage quoted, it is not of them in all things that Paul speaks, when he calls them carnal, but in respect to that of which he was writing, the divisions of the Church. They were sectarian, governed by a party spirit, which he characterizes as of the flesh, so that in that they were carnal, although in other things they might be spiritual. In the very nature of the case some watch more than others, while others are more fully led by the Spirit. Disposition, circumstances, training, and knowledge, all influence in this, so that such distinctions as we have pointed out do exist. Largely, if not entirely, they are due to the difference in our apprehension of Christ and His work, and our knowledge of His Word.

II. The Scriptures plainly teach that all Christians as to *standing* are perfect.

It may be well to explain here, in what sense the words standing and state are used in this article. Standing, we use to express what we are *in Christ*. State, that which we are in our *actual experience* and condition here. This distinction is necessary to the right understanding of the word, in which we have the truth presented from both standpoints. Thus, speaking of what we are as to standing, the Word says, "Ye ARE dead;" and presenting the same truth from the standpoint of state it says, "*reckon* yourselves dead".

In Heb. vi. 1, we find an exhortation given to "go on to perfection;" a passage that has been sadly misunderstood both as to its meaning and application. Paul was writing to *Hebrews*, and exhorts them to leave the "beginning of the Word of Christ," (see margin) and go on to perfection. The Jews had in *germ* the doctrines of Christ, seven of which are mentioned by Paul, none of which are the Christian aspect, but all the "beginning of the Word," as held and taught among the Jews. Christ now is the foundation, (1 Cor. iii. 10), but he is not once mentioned in the list, nor is any *distinctively* Christian doctrine. "Repentance from dead works," is now "repentance toward God;" while dead works are purged from the conscience *once for all* by the blood of Christ, (Heb. ix. 14; x. 2). "Faith toward God" is now "towards Jesus Christ." "The doctrine of baptisms"

has no reference to the ordinance of baptism, as it is in the plural, and the Greek word used is not that used for the ordinance, but that which is used in Mark vii. 4, and Heb. ix. 10, translated "washing," and it is clearly of the same "divers washings" that Paul here speaks, all of which as types contained the "beginning of the Word of Christ". So with the other items; a careful study will convince the child of God that they are Jewish not Christian aspects of truth.

Now Paul, writing to Hebrews, who held and believed these, said, leave them and go on to perfection, "for the law made nothing perfect but the bringing in of a better hope did". It is the perfection in Christ that is meant. Paul then proceeds to set forth in what that perfection consisted. Under Judaism there was imperfection as to priesthood, this Paul shows by many arguments reasoning well, that "if perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. vii. 11.) In contrast with this the perfection of Christ's priesthood is shown in chapters vii. and viii. Then in chapter ix., we have imperfection as to access, (v. 7), the tabernacle, (v. 11), and redemption, (v. 12-14), in contrast to the perfection of all in Christ.

Then in chapter x., the imperfect cleansing under Judaism is shown, (v. 1-2; ix. 9), (see margin); in contrast to the perfect cleansing by the blood of Christ. (Heb. x. 2, 10, 14.)

Christ's work is all perfect, whether it be the priest, the sacrifice, or the work done. All is perfect, and it is this perfection Paul urges Hebrews to go on to. It is a blessed truth that the simplest believer *has* perfection in Christ the very moment he believes. "Ye are *complete* in Him." "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect *in one*."

III. The Bible also teaches that as to *state* all Christians are imperfect.

Hence Paul, speaking of what he was *in* Christ says, "let *us* therefore as many as *be* perfect," (Phil. iii. 15), while just before he had said, speaking of his actual state, "not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." (Phil. iii. 12.)

This two-fold aspect of truth runs all through the Word. Thus we are "clean every whit," (John xiii. 10), that is *perfectly* cleansed as to standing *in Christ*: yet as to *state*, *needing*, so the Master says, to have our

feet washed, our walk, our life, cleansed from the daily defilement of the way.

So also, as to *state*, "*every* branch (no exceptions) *that beareth* fruit he cleanseth it, (so the Greek) that it may bring forth more fruit:" yet in the next verse we read, "now ye are *already* clean," (Alford's translation). So too the believer as to standing, is sanctified, yes, perfectly, the very moment he believes, "but of him are ye in Christ Jesus *who* of God *is made unto us* wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) As Christ is the perfect one; as we are complete in Him; what *He is made unto us* must be perfect. Receiving Christ I have all *in* Him. Acts xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. vi. 11; Heb. x. 10, etc., teach the same truth. Yet while "we are sanctified *by the offering of the body* of Jesus *once for all*;" we need also to be sanctified *through the truth* as to *state*.

Thus in writing to Christians as to their practical life here, we find apostles constantly exhorting to higher, purer lives. Never once is a class recognized who did not need such instruction; often the writers class themselves with those they exhort; while everywhere the imperfection of believers is recognized. Never do we find Christians classed as sanctified and unsanctified; holy and unholy; although we do find those who are spoken of *as* sanctified, *as* saints, spoken of as needing to be cleansed, to be made holy, and as having sin in the life. Thus in writing to Corinth, Paul addresses himself to the church at Corinth, "the sanctified in Christ Jesus (so the Greek) thus showing the character of those to whom he writes, the Greek expressing a *completed* act when it speaks of them as sanctified. Yet as we read the letter we find these same persons *carnal* and in many ways far from the truth. John says, "If *we* say (himself and those to whom he writes) that we have no sin we deceive ourselves".

Our state at present is not the same as our standing, because redemption is not yet complete. We are *waiting* for the redemption of *the body*; and then, state and standing will be one, but not till then.

IV. The movement we have been considering is open to several grave objections.

First, it is open to the objection that it turns the attention of the believer to himself. At least such has been its tendency if we may judge by the addresses and testimonies given by its advocates.

Second, *it lowers the standard of holiness.*

It may seem strange that a movement which has for its professed object the advancement of holiness should do this, but it is the logical result of a false position taken.

The thought that a state of sinlessness has been attained, *can only come from a low estimate of what sin is.* Hence by lowering the standard of sin, it lowers of necessity the standard of holiness.

What is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law," (1 John iii. 4); "All unrighteousness is sin," (1 John v. 17); "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," (Rom. xiv. 23); "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin," (James iv. 17).

These are the great definitions of sin. In connection with these we have an inspired comment on the law, showing how it is to be understood; and that the great sins mentioned include all lesser offences of that class. Thus the command, "Thou shalt not kill," forbids all malice, hatred, and hard thoughts. "Whoso *hateth* his brother is a murderer." (1 John iii. 15; Matt. v. 22). So, too, lust is a violation of the law against adultery. (Matt. v. 28). "To have respect of persons is sin," (James ii. 9), because a violation of the command to love thy neighbour *as thyself*.

The wise man says, "out of the heart are the issues of life;" the strong pulsations of the heart send the life-blood through the great arteries to every part of the frame. But if the fountain should be polluted it would send forth impure streams to every part. Applying this figure the Saviour says, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," etc. The heart is a great fountain from which the streams flow; and this fountain is "deceitful above all things and incurably wicked," (so the Hebrew of Jer. xvii. 9). We only know our hearts by the feelings, intuitions and beliefs of which we are conscious. Of these, many we know to be wrong, all of them are defective; for where is the feeling or affection that we are conscious of that is not? and *moral defect is sin.* This fountain sends out its streams of thoughts, words, and actions. Where then, is the thought, word, or act, that as to the motive that prompts it, the means it uses, or the end to be obtained, is in all things as God would have it? And back of all these are the inner thoughts of which the psalmist writes; thoughts that scarce shape themselves and yet are known to the great I AM; and *all evil thoughts are sinful.* And back of these we find the old corrupt nature from which all lust springs, and *all lust is sin.* Nay, if we have clear apprehensions of the truth we shall see how utterly corrupt we are, and magnify that grace that saves even such as we.

To lower the standard of sin is to make light of the Father's love; to disparage the work of Christ for us on the cross; to lessen the value of the Holy Spirit's work in us; to rob the eternal God of much of the glory that redemption brings; and to take from the lustre of the risen church, when in the presence of her Lord she is made like Him.

Third, it indirectly dishonours *the person* of the Lord.

In order to establish the fact of sinlessness, those who claim to have received the blessing of "holiness through faith" have to explain all in their experience which conflicts with the claim, as no sin. Hence much that is sin in fact is called infirmity. What is done ignorantly is no sin, although the Word plainly teaches the reverse. Sin-offerings had to be offered for "*sins of ignorance*;" while the Saviour taught, "he that knew his master's will and prepared not, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that *knew not*, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few." (Luke xii. 47, 48.) Degrees of guilt there were, still guilt, and punishment. So also it is said, "*temptation is not sin*," and Hebrews iv. 15, is quoted in proof. Here again is a failure to understand the word; the words "we are, yet," are in italics, *hence not in the Greek*; the sense of which is that Christ was tempted (made proof of) in all things *apart* from sin. That is, he did not possess a sinful nature, hence the temptations which spring from this, properly *lust*, Christ *did not have*. To think otherwise would be to dishonour Him. We must distinguish between *natural*, and *sinful* appetites and desires; between those which God has implanted, such as hunger, love of the beautiful, etc., which Christ had; and those sinful desires which we have, but Christ *had not*. "The *lust* of the flesh, the *lust* of the eye, and the *pride* of life, *is not* of the Father." (1 John ii. 16.) All temptations from our own lusts *are sinful*, such Christ could not and did not have, and Hebrews iv. 15, especially guards us against the thought. In this way, by imputing *lust* to Christ, they indirectly dishonor the person of the Lord.

V. In closing this article we would examine briefly some of the texts relied on by the advocates of the movement.

"Herein is our love made perfect." (1 John iv. 17.) As love is the fulfilling of the law, if our love is made perfect, it would *be sinlessness*. In looking at this passage it must be remembered that John speaks of the new man only, that which is born of Adam being regarded as dead, as having no present existence. Hence he says, "whosoever is born of God *doth not* commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he *can not* sin because he is born of God." (1 John iii. 8.) This is said of every believer, not of a special class, hence as there is sin in the actual life it is only of the new man, the man born of God, John speaks. The margin gives the correct translation of the passage,

‘herein is love *with us* made perfect,” showing that it is *God’s love*, not ours, the apostle means. The Father’s love *for us* is perfect; the Father’s love *in us* is perfect; but the manifestation of that love in our lives is imperfect, hence there is sin.

“That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift,” (Rom. i. 11), and other passages have been quoted as showing “a second blessing,” a blessing as distinct as conversion. But in the next verse, Paul explains it as a mutual blessing to be received by mutual fellowship.

We read when a sinner believes on Christ, that he is translated from darkness to light; out of the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of God’s dear Son Now, nowhere in the Word do we have another change spoken of as definite and distinct like this; hence there can be none *in fact*. The ground upon which men believe they have passed from death unto life, is the plain teaching and clear promises of Scripture; we have none such for a second blessing. If it is meant that sanctification is complete, (that which is through the truth) then sin would be impossible, because if sin, then cleansing would be needed.

If by a second blessing is meant the realization of a great truth so as to give great peace and joy, influencing heart and life, then no fault could be found, because most Christians have received such not twice, but many times. Certain it is the writers of the New Testament never separated “the body” into two parts, the one sanctified, the other unsanctified; the one holy, the other unholy; the one perfect, and the other imperfect. The absence of all such, when if true it must have been prominent, is to say the least suggestive.

Romans vii. and viii. It is said that in chapter vii. we have Paul’s experience as unsanctified and in chapter viii. his experience after he has received the blessing. But here again the plain teaching of this Scripture is lost sight of, and a deliverance attributed to Paul which he did not receive, because we find him *still groaning* in chapter viii. Yet there is a difference between the two states in which Paul found himself, or rather which he describes; and one that many Christians have known by sweet experience.

We referred at the beginning of this article to the existence of the two natures in the believer; and it is the old nature, the flesh, that in both chapters causes the groaning. But with this difference, in chapter vii. the soul is living under law, the truth as to the believer’s relation to the law has not been grasped, the soul believing itself still under law and conscious of its failure because of the joint sense and power of the flesh cries, “Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” The figure being taken from the ancient customs of chaining a dead body to a living man, to illustrate the new living man linked to the old dead body of sin. Not that the soul in this condition apprehends it as dead, only that Paul so describes it.

Then in verse 25, the soul grasps the precious truth that through Christ is deliverance. That “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” because sin was condemned in the flesh when Christ died; and therefore the believer is brought into glorious relationship to God and His Son. That this relationship is a present one in spite of the flesh which God sees *as* dead. The apprehension of this brings out the ascription of praise to God, “I thank God through Christ Jesus our Lord”. Not that the soul by an act of faith, a second blessing, gets rid of the flesh. No, it is still there, for we find after the thanksgiving for deliverance the apostle says, “so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin”. This is a remarkable testimony if we consider the force of the word “myself”. As if there were but one I, the new man, and the flesh, was no part of “myself”. “I was (so the Greek) crucified with Christ: (and therefore *am* dead) nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,” (Gal. ii. 26).

Paul *cuts off* the flesh, “*reckons*” it dead, remembers it *is dead* in God’s sight, and though alive in his experience he treats it as dead; hence the force of the “myself”.

In chapter viii., we find him still groaning, “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *waiting for* the adoption, the redemption of the body”. Here is the final deliverance, the blessed hope of the Church, “*when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is*”.

- It is in the resurrection, the redemption of *the body*, that we obtain final deliverance, and the flesh is taken away.

Paul says the law of sin is *in our members*; by which we understand that it is intimately connected with the body, hence its name, *the flesh*. Not that matter *as such* is sinful, but when it becomes part of the body it acquires new properties, hence *the law of sin* is very clearly linked with the body; though not confined to it because it affects the whole man, body, soul and spirit. To get rid of sin, to reach a sinless state, we must obtain the redemption of the body that all Scripture says is future. But the hope of such redemption, with the thought that before God the old man is dead, gives present peace.

Other passages might be referred to such as Matt. v. 48, 1 Thess. v. 23, &c., &c., but suffice it to observe that whether it be the Lord’s command or the Apostle’s prayer, the standard is the character of God Himself, and Scripture never lowers that standard to meet the experience that ever falls short of it.

In conclusion, we earnestly ask the reader to study closely the Word of God, to press forward constantly, aim always at a purer life, imitate Christ, never resting satisfied with self and its attainments but in all things, because ye are bought with a price, glorify God.

G. F. G.

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## JEHOSHAPHAT.

(Continued from page 148.)

THE friendship of Ahab was soon put to a severe test, and proved to be what all else is which is not of God—shallow and worthless.

The prophecy of Micaiah, doubtless had its effect in causing him to use extraordinary caution. What a sop it would have been to his uneasy conscience, could he only return in peace, and falsify the prediction of the prophet! Ahab, therefore, disguised himself, but Jehoshaphat went to the battle in his royal robes, and being supposed by the enemy to be the King of Israel, he was singled out for special attack, and soon was surrounded and in jeopardy.

It has been said that “man’s extremity is God’s opportunity”. Often at least it is so, and this occasion proved to be a notable instance. Being “at his wit’s end” Jehoshaphat “cried out”. It was an appeal to the living God; it was the cry of a convicted yet condoning backslider, it was a cry for help when every refuge failed.

Doubtless, Jehoshaphat was familiar with the sacred songs of his forefather David—and it may be that even in the midst of his alarm he remembered

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”. Certainly Jehoshaphat was given in a very remarkable way to prove the truth of the Psalm.

The ear of Jehovah was open to his cry, and His arm was quickly stretched out for his defence. “Jehoshaphat cried out and the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him.”

From Psalm cvii. it is evident that the Lord deals oftentimes after this manner with His people. In its

main features Jehoshaphat’s is no uncommon experience.

God often allows the self-willed backslider to go on till his own backslidings rebuke him. To allow him to prove by bitter experience the folly of his way. But blessed be His name—our faithful God is near at hand, as ready to hear the cry of those who have brought the trouble on themselves by their disobedience and stubbornness, as of those who are sufferers for righteousness’ sake.

The self-willed child may insist on walking alone, and refuse the proffered aid of the parent’s hand. But where is the parent who would not hasten to relieve, when at length the child has fallen down, and in its suffering cries for help? And God has a Father’s heart—“like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him”.

Therefore, let the child of God be encouraged to seek the Lord at all times. Let not Satan get advantage further still through his lying suggestion so often insinuated—“You need not seek the Lord now, He will not hear or succour, you have only yourself to blame, you must find your own way out of your troubles.” Nay even though one’s own heart and conscience be his worst accuser and condemner, still like Jehoshaphat, or David, or Jacob, or multitudes of others who have fallen into Satan’s snares, let your cry be to the Lord, for He it is, and he alone who can pluck your entangled feet out of the net. See (Ps. xxv. 15.)

“O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help.” (Hos. xiii. 9.) See also I Sam. xii. 20-25.

Ahab's disguise failed to accomplish its end. Vain are the wisdom, foresight, and prudence of man if he is found rushing in opposition to the counsels of God. The arrow shot at a venture finds out the joint of the harness. What a sight is here obtained of the overruling providence of God! To faith there is no such thing as "chance". The Scriptures abundantly shew how the most minute as well as the greatest circumstances are under the immediate disposal of God. "All things are for your sakes." The death of a sparrow, the falling of a hair, the guiding of an arrow from the bow, or a pebble from the sling, these and such like means are used by Almighty God for the working out of His sovereign will.

Hence the importance of seeking and obtaining divine help and guidance in all things, and at all times. Nothing is too trifling to bring to God, for eternal issues may hang upon the smallest circumstance. Some balances are so finely adjusted, that less than a hair will turn the scale—such are the turning points in life; a word, a look, may mould a motive, or determine a purpose, the issues of which may never end.

Thus ignominiously ended the life of Ahab; whilst Jehoshaphat humbled, and delivered like a bird from the fowler's snare, returned in peace to Jerusalem.

But, humbling and breaking down, important as they are, do not accomplish restoration to the Lord apart from the Word of God. Providence may be used by God as a plough to break up the fallow ground, and prepare the soil for the reception of the seed, but the Word of the Lord must be brought to bear upon the broken heart and quickened conscience, ere the soul that has strayed from Him can be happy in His presence.

So David prayed "make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice". So with Peter, there was the look of the Lord Jesus which broke his heart, so that he "went out and wept bitterly"; but after that there was the fire upon the sea shore, and the fish, and the dinner prepared, and the loving invitation come and dine, that Peter's heart being quite at rest, and assured of the unchanged love of his Lord might the better be prepared for the searching and thrice repeated rebuke, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me".

After this manner it was that the Lord dealt with Jehoshaphat. Jehu, the son of Hanani, the seer, went out to meet him, and said to the king "shouldst thou

help the ungodly, and love them that hate Jehovah?"

The whole of Jehoshaphat's sinful course is thus at a stroke laid bare and exposed to his view. The "friendship of the world" had been his snare, and now that the hand of the Lord had set him free, the voice of the Lord appeals to his conscience and his heart.

That the appeal was not in vain, and that the painful discipline had done its intended work at least for a time, is evident by what is recorded subsequently of the life of Jehoshaphat.

He went forth amongst the people from Beersheba to Mount Ephraim, and personally sought to restore them to the Lord God of their fathers. In short he became an itinerant preacher of the truth of God.

His exhortations also to the judges whom he set over the people, shew how the fear of the Lord was before his eyes.

Chapter xx., then follows, giving further evidence of the reality of the restoration of soul that had taken place.

A mighty combination of foes had come up against him with forces for which even the armies of Judah were no match; but Jehoshaphat has learned now the lesson of the Proverb, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding". He does not now first go forth to the conflict, and then consult the Lord, but with upright heart he first seeks counsel and help of the Lord, and then in assured confidence that Jehovah of Hosts is with him, he goes to the battle.

It was a beautiful sight. There stood the king in the midst of the congregation before the Lord—there were "their little ones, their wives, and their children". Prayer was made to the Lord, and their helplessness, and their ignorance confessed. "O our God wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee."

Could Jehovah refrain from responding to such an appeal? Verily NO. At once the Spirit of the Lord, choosing His own instrument whereby to speak, declared to them words of comfort and support. "Thus saith the Lord, be not afraid or dismayed because of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's."

In the morning, according to the word of the Lord they went forth, but yet again the faithful zealous voice of the king is heard with a further word of exhortation.

ye, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem. in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established. Believe His prophets so shall ye prosper." It is the parting exhortation of the Apostle, "I lead you to God and to the word of His grace". God, the only source of help and blessing, and to God the only means by which His mind is made known to man.

It is remarkable also that he sent singers in the front army to praise the Lord; this was faith indeed, to rely so count upon God to fulfil his word that it was deemed rashness, but humility to praise the Lord in victory before the battle had commenced. The Lord was faith like this ever disappointed. The Lord is as the Lord's, and faith could therefore reckon on victory was sure.

When they returned every man of Judah and Benjamin, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to return to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had caused them to rejoice over their enemies."

They went forth from the House of the Lord, and returned to the House of the Lord. They began to fear, and ended in triumphant praise. It was God first, and God last. He was acknowledged in all their ways, and consequently all their steps were

in the blessedness of thus hanging upon God! The Lord in the peaceful confidence, the assured victory. The precious lesson be deeply impressed on the hearts of every child of God.

J. R. C.

#### NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON,

By W. LINCOLN.

##### T II. DIALOGUE III., FROM CHAP. V. 2 TO VI. 12.

IN the opening of this new dialogue, the Bride recounts a third invitation of the Bridegroom to her. His first one is found in chap. ii. 10-13, and is for her to come out unto Him. His second invitation, in chap. iii. 3, is to come with Him from Lebanon. Now we have His third desire. Its gist appears to be that the Bride should make no reserve of her heart, of her affections towards Himself. These three invitations, when they are quite acted upon, would result in the whole-heartedness and completeness of Christian love. By the first we are summoned to be separated from all evil and separated unto God. By

the second we are taught to look for the companionship of our Lord as that which we shall certainly enjoy, if through choice of His friendship, we discover the unreality and hollowness of the religious world. Then by the third we are encouraged to set Himself before our souls as our true and lasting gain, at any cost. Aught kept back from Him, aught allowed of heart disobedience, or of non-surrender of self or of the soul wholly set upon Him, is nothing else than dead loss to us and grievous to Him, who gave up all he had to win us solely for Himself. (Titus ii. 14.)

In order to our full apprehension of the Lord's will as here expressed, it behoves us to recall to mind the fact that this (His third) invitation is referred to by Himself in Revelation iii. 20. This passage not only enables us to identify the Bridegroom-Speaker, and to make us understand that He does not forget or call back His words, and that there is a sense in which His language in this Song we do well to apply to ourselves; but also we may learn hence, how abhorrent is self-satisfaction unto Him, especially when it is conjoined, as it is there and generally is, with spiritual poverty, and nakedness, and blindness to one's actual condition. When shall we perceive that God would have us find our all in His beloved Son; that God in His wisdom has made Him our Righteousness, and our Sanctification, and our Redemption, and our all; that we have nothing outside of Himself, and that our wisdom consists in opening our spirits and our entire heart and soul unto His grace, and fulness, and love, and in daily living upon what He is made unto us? This word of His, 'Open to Me,' is explained by the Bride herself in the Song, when she owns, 'I sleep but my heart waketh'. That is to say, she is in that state of soul, when one is neither asleep nor awake. And to this statement agrees the parallel place in the Revelation, where, when the Lord again says, 'Open to Me,' He avers that she, whom He addresses, is neither cold nor hot. In each passage there is the suggestion of half-heartedness, either as to the spirit or to the walk, or to both. And this the Lord, in grace, explains that He cannot endure. He would that we were either for Him, and with Him, and wholly His own, or against Him; that we either give Himself our all, ourselves, or nothing. If the suspicion arises in the mind of any reader that in this exposition of these three invitations, and of their relative bearings on himself, I am exaggerating, let him attempt to adjust the point of each candidly to his own conscience.

By the appeal with which the Lord here backs His entreaty, He would seem to imply how much He is in earnest with us in these matters. He adverts, by anticipation in the Song, either to His Gethsemane and Calvary sufferings, endured for us who are His, or else, what seems more probable from the connexion of Rev. iii. with this Scripture, to His rejection by the mass of the religious throughout the entire night of this dispensation. In the prophecy, the professing Church is beheld to have everything *except* a living Christ. He is shut out. But no matter. She is rich and increased with goods, and has, in her own account, need of nothing! Likewise both with the lukewarm Church at large and with the individual backsliding soul, the cause of this wretchedness is attributed to love of ease! Surely the hint found here as to the causes which have superinduced this decline is most valuable for him who desires integrity of heart. Nor will faithfulness allow me to refrain from adding that I think when the Lord is referring to the Laodicean boast, I am rich and have waxed rich, He eyes the actual fact, that this poor nominal Church has very much where He had nothing, and that it would hide from itself its love of this world, by zeal in the behalf of other's welfare. For this last thought is certainly contained in the Lord's warning, "You yourself are the wretched one". (Rev. iii. 17, Greek.) Fain would it cover its own leanness of soul by outward bustle in the behalf of others, whereas the zeal should be directed towards its own repentance.

In the case of the individual soul, which is specially contemplated in the Song, the Lord, of course, however He may abandon a professing, boasting multitude, is sure, from His very faithfulness, to interfere for its restoration. Hence we next read here, "My beloved put in His hand by the hole of the door"; and as a consequence, "my bowels were moved for Him". Wonderful indeed after the beautiful experience of the first four chapters, that it is possible for any one to backslide so far as the state here depicted proves can be the case. But, not to advance is to recede, is an axiom in the divine life. And specially, when there is some trifling with conscience, some reserve, however small, in the surrender of ourselves to Him, some halting in our obedience, probably arising through our observing the ways of others, instead of being occupied with Himself and with His love:—when there is aught of this Laodiceanism, howbeit there may be nothing

gross, nothing that the eyes of others can readily discern, there is spiritual declension set in! But happy is it for us, who after all are truly His, that this state of things, He cannot and will not brook. Because he loves us to the end, He will wash our feet daily in the water of the Word. If He thus wash us not, it is because we have no part with Him. Oh, how much we owe daily unto God, and unto the intercession of our great High Priest, for continued restoration into His light and love.

The effect of the Lord's action on the wayward spirit, as seen in v. 5, is very beautiful. Death is applied at once to all that held down the soul and to all that barred Him out from any corner of our hearts. This myrrh is "sweet smelling". That very thing, death, which the unbeliever dreads, has blessing in it to the Lord's own people. I speak not now of the death of the body, though in this sense also the thing is true. But the having the sentence of death in ourselves, the carrying about with us the death of Jesus, even as the Israelites in the wilderness carried, through all their wanderings, the bones of Joseph; oh, this death is emancipation from the flesh and from the world. "The snare is broken and we are delivered." We have died, and our life is hid with Christ in God. And therefore we are encouraged to mortify our members which are upon the earth, and to set our affections on things above.

Nevertheless, a slighted Lord and a grieved Spirit can and do let us know that it is evil and bitter for us to turn away in heart from Him who so loves us! Hence, precisely as we saw was the case when the Lord had uttered His first invitation to the believing soul to come out or away to Him, and that soul had hesitated to obey Him; so we find likewise is the experience here. As then she had to confess, "I sought Him but I found Him not" (iii. 1); so here we read: "I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself and was gone: my soul failed when He spake; I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I called Him, but He gave me no answer". Oh! surely every Christian understands this verse in his own acquaintance with the ways of the Lord towards him, when he has been guilty of conscious disobedience to His blessed will. Though *this* Brother, when offended, is not "harder to be won than a strong city" (Prov. xviii. 19), yet verily, He will let us know that it is no trifle with Him, for us to value little His

precious love. He who had defiled himself ceremonially of old had to be sprinkled with the water of purification on the *third* day, and even then was again to be sprinkled with that water on the *seventh* day, ere he was pronounced typically clean. (Num. xix. 19.) What I would impress on readers and on myself here is, that the restoration of spirit, through the Spirit of God applying the word about Christ's death for me, is not such an immediate thing as that instantly I am again filled with joy and peace. But we are to be occupied with what our sin was, as to its heinousness, and what it had wrought, so that restored, we may walk before the Lord more carefully and more humbly, remembering always that if we are called to companionship with Him, such companionship can only be in His own unsullied light.

The watchmen, or pastors, "spiritual ones" (Gal. vi.), to whom the sorrowing one may apply for counsel, as in chap. iii. 3, and again here, are found to deal faithfully with the case. For "faithful are the wounds of a friend". They may have to tear away the subterfuges and the excuses by which the soul had been blinded to the downward course that it had pursued, and to the love of the world and of its wealth, or fame, or ease which it had exhibited; but all this is necessary and in very love. And the blessed issue of their course of procedure and of the Lord's own attitude of apparent reserve is the energetic inwrought conviction: Oh! tell Him that "I am sick with love". He has no other object in view, nor should His people have towards each other, in any exercise of discipline, than the welfare and restoration of the sorrowful one. And restoration has set in, in full tide when one can utter the last clause of ver. 8, as if His love alone were everything that is cared for; and when being questioned, 'What is thy Beloved more than another beloved?' readily, and in the glowing language of her heart which follows in ver. 9, can speak of Him as here this Bride does.

(To be continued.)

### THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN.

(Continued).

A RIGHT understanding of Ephes. v. 22-33 will show us that the husband and wife (and they are taken as the normal aspect of men and women) illustrate Christ and the Church (v. 32). Would it not then be a marring of the intention of the Lord here

should any woman assume or usurp the power to teach the man. We know there are weak men and strong women, physically and mentally. We know there are unspiritual men and spiritually minded women. We know there are babes in Christ and "mothers in Israel," but we must look at the plain word and the plain intention of the Lord in teaching us of the woman's subject place.

Woman subject to and silent before man, "veiled," retiring, is the illustration and representation of what the Church is before the Lord; and any departure from this position spoils the intentional lesson the Lord would teach by Christian women. Let us ponder this, let us consider calmly whether any seeming good wrought, or any work done, *can please the Lord*, though in His grace He may work by it, if there be departure from His own counsel, and assumption made by women that they were forced to act, either because of the want or the weakness of men. And let us also consider whether, *in the end*, the Lord will endorse any Christian woman's service, where she has usurped authority, not delegated by Him, and slipped to the front, "unveiling herself," to make an impression on others.

Some seem to work well for a while—yea, even to do good, but will their work receive a reward if they have departed from their lawful sphere and entered a sphere forbidden of the Lord, because enticed therein by their own feelings and the foolish encouragement of the populace. (See 2 Tim. ii. 5.)

Again, let us remember, and let our sisters well ponder it—yea, we earnestly and lovingly beseech them to do it—that when women take a forward place among men, even with the best of motives, they do incalculable harm in ways that need not now be even named.

Nor, while Christian women are members of the Church of Christ, and form a constituent part of the local assemblies where they live, yet Christian women cannot, of themselves, form an assembly or church locally. For even as the members, without the Head, would be lifeless, imperfect, so women, apart from men, are incomplete, and must not usurp functions delegated by the Lord to the man, who is by Him created "head of the woman". And this we say not invidiously, but anxious only lest sorrow and confusion should arise from departure from His wise ordinances.

Nor, seeing that the breaking of bread is intended to be the collective expression of *the Church*, both

generally and particularly, of her faith in her Lord—a collective expression of remembrance of His death “till He come” again—should Christian women attempt, of *themselves*, to meet together for the breaking of bread, but should they be so circumstanced as to desire so to do—and yet for lack of brethren be unable so to do—they should prayerfully wait on the Lord until His time come to open the way for them.

For, supposing any do so, and there come a Christian man to the place, desiring to find simple Christian worship, then does it devolve upon women to receive or refuse this man—to accept, question, catechise? Is this right? Is not the woman here usurping authority over the man? Exercising Church rule? Forced into so doing, because on forbidden ground.

Thus we may conclude it, not only inadvisable but wrong, for women alone to act as the local expression of an assembly, seeing it must soon bring them into variance with the precepts of the Lord concerning their subject place.

And now let us turn to the other side. Let us gather out from the many and varied commendations and injunctions given in the Word concerning the holy women of the present dispensation, some practical and soul-stirring lines of ministry wherewith to cheer and bless.

Let assurance be given to the more loving heart that its broken alabaster is still remembered, and has its sweet savour still for the Lord. Let light be thrown from the Word on the woman's pathway of service, that the devotion, the rare energies, the unrivalled patience, the wise tact of woman, may be utilised in such fashion now that He may say of the many now as He said of the Mary of old—“They have chosen the better part which shall not be taken away from them”.

Of the Syro-Phœnician woman He said—“O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt”. Of Mary He said—“Why trouble ye the woman. Let her alone. Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world there shall also this, that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her.” Of Dorcas it is written (Acts ix. 36)—“This woman was full of good works,” &c.

Again: “And certain women, *which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities*, Mary, called Magdalene, . . . and Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna and many others, which ministered unto Him of their substance.”

Again: “Help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel.”

Romans xvi. has many women's names noted as co-labourers in the Gospel—Phebe, v. 1, 2; Priscilla, v. 3, 4, 5; Mary, v. 6; Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis, v. 12; Julia and others, v. 15.

“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister (Mary).” Martha received Him into her house, and there Mary sat at His feet and heard His word, and such was their confidence in His friendship that, when their brother Lazarus was sick, they could send him the message—“Lord, behold he *whom Thou lovest* is sick,” and await with confidence His coming, though they were sorely tried by His way.

Let us ponder Mary's service. In Luke x. we find her listening at the feet of Jesus, and commended by Him, as having chosen the better part. In John xi., we find her abiding quietly in the house, while Martha runs out to meet the Lord. Martha brings her the message—“The Master is come and calleth for thee”. She then goes out hastily to Him, and falls down at His feet weeping and saying, “Lord, if *Thou hadst* been here, my brother had not died”.

The Lord weeps with her (aye, and with many a Mary now, in the interval prior to resurrection while death yet is), and then raises Lazarus from the tomb and restores him to his own. In John xii. we find Mary, while others are serving and feasting, breaking her alabaster box of ointment over His feet and anointing them, and then loosening her hair (the glory of the woman, 1 Cor. xi.), she uses it as a towel to wipe His feet. (She turns her natural acquirements into lowly service.) No one understands her action but the Lord. He does, and he commends it for a memorial wherever the Gospel should be preached. She had understood His groaning over Lazarus' grave, and then His mighty power in resurrection. She had entered in spirit into His sufferings and glory, and now was silently telling Him, by the anointing, she knew it all. Oh! what a feast to His heart, that was so little understood; that got so seldom sympathy: “She hath done it for my burial”.

Mary is not found *at the grave of Jesus* at all. She could bide at home waiting the resurrection morn. Thus Mary's learning in Luke x. issues in Mary's action in John xii., and so she gains a place never to be taken away.

She was occupied always with the Lord Himself, and

thus she renders unconscious service, which obtains from Him its meet reward. Misunderstood even by the disciples, she waits till the Lord's word clears her, rebuking their coldness, and contrasting her devotion to His person as above even doing good to the poor.

This, Mary's story, gives us the clue to the service that women should be occupied with—*i.e.*, learners, in order to be doers, helpers, co-labourers, not *teachers* or *preachers*.

For woman, essentially, is *ministry of deeds and not ministry in doctrine* appointed. We have before shown her unfitness for teaching and her meetness for service *naturally*. And the purpose for which she was created naturally, is *illustrative* of the purpose for which she is meet, as newly created in Christ Jesus, and a member of the One Body, a fellow-helper in good works.

Into work, where the man cannot come, she goes, and goes meetly. Man's hand would spoil where her's fosters.

We gather now, from the following Scriptures, the specific work of both young and old ; and what is true and appointed for the wife, is true in principle for the woman.

Let us again remember, the woman is the learner from the man, to be the doer. He, from his Head, receiveth to impart to her. And she, in silence learneth, in order to carry out the Lord's will and do works meet for His approval. The Lord of the Church nourishes and cherishes the Church, that it may be healthy and comely in good works. So doth the husband, the wife, or the man, (the new begotten) the woman. Now elderly women are exhorted to be "teachers of good things"; that *they may teach* the young women to be sober (serious), to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, &c. (Titus ii. 3, &c.). Thus the sphere of elderly women is defined to be that of teachers of the younger women, and the consistency of the elder will calm and sway the more wayward hearts of the younger.

They are also exhorted (1 Tim. v. 9, &c.) unto varied good works, such as *caring for children*, lodging strangers, washing the saints' feet, relieving the afflicted. These comprise a very large and blessed (though lowly) sphere of service. Moreover she is exhorted (1 Tim. iv. 5, &c.) to set her hope on God, not on man, for support, and to continue in prayers and supplications night and day. And all these injunctions to, and de-

scriptions of, godly women, are given through the Spirit, to guard against the wiles of Satan, who would ever seek, by the weaker woman, to delude and seduce the man. Hence the exceeding care taken to enjoin on women their special retired mode of service. How blessed then are the elder women who thus act ! How satisfied in the work ! How helpful in the Gospel.

And if such care be needful on the part of the elder women lest Satan gains an advantage, how much greater the caution needed by younger women.

The godly heart groans at the way in which the tempter succeeds, by the lust of the flesh, in seducing the hearts of the younger women from Christ. They are brought forward, mingled with young men, made to lead the singing, encouraged to dress fashionably, and thus, under guise of not appearing peculiar, become snares for the too easily seduced heart of man.

Much false incense is thus burnt where pure incense only should ascend. Much apparent fervour, where none really exists. Much pleasing to the ear is heard where the two-edged sword of the Spirit should be cutting. Let us be sober therefore and vigilant, for our adversary, the devil, seeketh greatly through them to gain the advantage.

Now to younger women are given counsels meet for good. (1 Pet. iii. 1-9.) Attention to home and home duties, glorifying God by the tenor of life (conversation) there, being strongly dwelt on. Neglect of husband and children, under guise of service to God forbidden. The husband treated as the lord, even as Sarah did to Abraham—the meek and quiet spirit winning glory for God. The co-working with the husband implied both in prayer and service. (6, 7.)

Then again, the training of the children is her special business, and entails special blessing. (2 Tim. i. 5.) (And this is true for the unmarried, in their care for orphans and neglected ones and children of unbelievers.)

To them also, good works, faith, love, holiness, solemn bearing, are enjoined. (1 Tim. ii. 10-15.)

Read 2 Epistle John, as to the course enjoined for an elderly lady (a widow evidently) and her children.

Thus we find the sphere of the younger women is the nurture of the young, and the co-working, if married, with their husbands as "heirs together of the grace of life". And as they advance in age they become teachers of the *younger women* (not men). Always, however, meekly representing the Lord in lowliness of spirit.

In Exodus xxxv. 25, 26, we read: "And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun goats' hair."

Wise-hearted women, and women stirred up in wisdom, wrought, and wrought long and patiently, to produce work meet for the Tabernacle of the Lord. They wrought in blue, in purple, in scarlet, in fine linen, and some in goats' hair. Each thread, each piece, each hanging, each curtain, telling out the wondrous tale of redemption through the Son of God—the man Christ Jesus. Enough for them that the Lord had commanded Moses concerning it and given him the pattern. They carried it out; the arrangement of the colours was not left to their fancy or taste—the size of the curtains not according to their thoughts, but all was according to the pattern given on the Mount.

And so now will the wise-hearted women fulfil the counsels given by the Lord, and carry out His designs—each one working her part of the web, which, when finished, shall show forth, in wondrous, beauty His perfections; and, though unconscious of observation themselves, they shall by their very occupation for the Lord, become a praise to His name, as wholly obedient to His commands, faithful amidst the faithless, seeking not this world's smile, but their Lord's—"She hath done what she could".

A. O. M.

### DAVID.

THE flesh never appears so unlovely, as when manifested in connection with the things of God; its deformity and enormity are shown out in contrast with the divine association, whether person, place or things.

It was so on the occasion of this visit of David's to Abimelech. Deliberate deceit and lying utterances in the presence of the priest of Jehovah, standing before the twelve cakes of memorial, (in one of which he, David, of the tribe of Judah, was represented), and fragrant incense. The leaven of deceit in contrast with the fine unleavened flour, and with the sweet incense, the stench of the flesh.

Yet all this set off the patient grace of God.

Haunted by the persecutor Saul, pinched with hunger, and off the high ground of faith, the anointed

of Jehovah acted out of character with himself, yet obtained the bread.

This, his want of simple faith, was manifested in another connection.

Driven out of Saul's presence as his minstrel, he was without a sword, yet standing on the defensive; he enquired of Abimelech "Is there not here under thy hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor any weapon with me because the king's business requireth haste".

To this the priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine is here, if thou wilt take that, take it."

This called back past scenes, aroused feelings in David's soul, and Satan who was behind the scene for mischief, seems to have given music to the name Goliath, and to the massive weapon charms, for David exclaimed, "There is none like *that* give it me".

Thus the man of God, who in the day of simple confidence in Jehovah, had refused Saul's armour, turns, in the days of weakness, to the giant's sword.

It is a great thing to hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end, to acquire the *habit* of trusting in God, rather than the occasional *frame* in our every day circumstances and service, with all its difficulties and trials.

This done, David fled. The scene had closed for the time, but the results of his visit were yet to come.

A snare was laid for David's feet; Satan, the watchful enemy, was bent on mischief, and succeeded.

Doeg, the Edomite, Saul's chief herdsman, was then detained before the Lord; he heard and observed, and, when he returned to his master, reported all.

David fled to Achish, King of Gath, and when the words of his servants respecting him aroused David's fears, he by an artifice escaped, and fled to the cave of Adullam.

There he gathered a band, a troop, and strange indeed were the constituents of his army—persons in distress, in debt, and discontented; a true description of the spiritual condition of those who gather to Christ now by faith; about four hundred such gathered around the anointed of Jehovah who became their captain. Among them were his father and his mother.

They all moved on to Mizpeh of Moab, to the king of which, he committed his father and his mother, to care for them till he should see "what God would do for him".

This is a fine touch in the picture. David hunted

by Saul as a partridge on the mountains, had heart and time to care for his parents.

The champion of Israel, the anointed of the Lord, was an affectionate and dutiful son.

Oh to be uniform and universal in the manifestation of the mind of Christ !

In this he was surely a shadow of Him who in the garden said, "If ye seek *me* let *these* go their way," and on the cross committed his mother to the care of John ; who also had an ear, a heart, and an answer of peace for the thief. Beloved fellow believer, let us seek grace so to dispose of our own cares and griefs by faith and prayer, as to have heart and leisure for those of others, who are every day appealing to us for sympathy and help.

Communion with God will fit us for sympathy with the sorrowing, and fellowship with the joyful, and that in quick succession—

"A heart at leisure from itself  
To sooth and sympathise,  
To meet the glad with cheerful smile,  
And wipe the weeping eyes."

David next moved, at the bidding of Gad the seer, to the forest of Hareth.

In Hareth sorrow overtook him, fresh as to facts, although not, as to his fears. Abimelech's son Abiathar joined him, having escaped the sword of Saul, when he slew all the family of Abimelech. He told the sad tale of blood and sorrow resulting from David's visit to his father. David was moved, saying, "I knew it that day when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons in thy father's house". He commiserated with him, and took him under his care, saying, "Abide with me, fear not, with me shalt thou be in safe guard".

This man Abiathar, became David's companion in all his troubles, and was eventually made priest by him. When David was old and Adonijah sought the throne, Abiathar sided with him, and on that account, was deprived of the priesthood by Solomon, when executing his father's decrees of judgment.

All this was the fulfilment of Jehovah's word against Eli, and the execution of the judicial sentence against his house, because he restrained not his sons from their evil conduct as priests. (1 Sam. ii. 31, and 1 Kings ii. 17.)

Thus we trace events accomplishing the purpose of God, although not so intended by those immediately

concerned. Saul was guilty, nor was David free from blame, yet Jehovah's word was fulfilled and his purpose accomplished. This is sovereignty : man actuated by his evil passion, merely to gratify his nature, and do his own will, yet unwittingly and unwillingly doing the will of God.

Thus Joseph's brethren, moved with envy on account of his dreams interpreted by themselves, and in order to test their truth, or promising to render them false, sold him ; yet, in fact, took steps to their fulfilment, for by this means Joseph reached Egypt, the scene of their accomplishment.

Subsequently they acknowledged their guilt in this, saying, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," but Joseph, taking Jehovah's purpose as his standpoint, said, "God sent me before your face to preserve life by a great deliverance". "Be not angry with yourselves."

In this same light did the Apostles view the crucifixion of their Lord, when they said to the Jews, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by the hands of wicked men, or wicked hands, have crucified"; and again when they said to God, "of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus whom thou has anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done".

This is still true, there is one only source of power, one purpose and one absolute will. This will, all creatures must do, cheerfully or against their will, and all events are made to fulfil this one divine purpose. In the church or in the world, in heaven, on earth, or in hell ; in the wise and the brutish in knowledge, the philosopher and the politician, all men, even those who are blind and brazen enough to say, "There is no God," are nevertheless made to do His will, and yet are amenable to Him for their pride and infidelity, and, except found in Christ eventually, by simply believing the gospel now, will be judged by the man Christ Jesus, the Lord of glory.

Yes, God still puts his hook in the nose of His enemies, and His bridle in their jaws, and while they boast, as if the saw should shake him that handles it, God overrules their conduct to fulfil His will.

To return, David is now found in another position, and on other ground, offensive ground against the Philistines, and befriending Judah.

The Philistines had besieged Keilah, a town belonging to Judah, and robbed the threshing floor.

David heard the report and betook himself to Jehovah to enquire if he should go against them; Jehovah answered in the affirmative "Go and smite the Philistines".

His men were fearful, and hesitated. David enquired of Jehovah again, who answered as before, adding the promise of victory.

On this they acted, fought, conquered, and brought away the spoil. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah, his brethren, acting in his true character as Jehovah's man against his enemies.

In verse 6 of this chapter, 1 Sam. xxii., an interesting circumstance is noticed, one of these beautiful touches by the Holy Ghost in history.

Abiathar, the son of Abimelech, a refugee from Saul to David's succour, when he fled to David to Keilah, brought down an ephod, part of the priestly garb in his hand; perhaps the very ephod worn by his deceased father. Whether or not, it was at hand for use in the moment of need.

Saul again appears as the unaltered enemy of David. He had heard that David had come to Keilah, and now made sure of taking him, even connecting God's name with his thought, his murderous thought, against Jehovah's anointed.

"God," said he "hath delivered him into mine hand, for he is shut up by entering into a town that hath gates and bars"; with this hope he gathered all the people together to go down to Keilah.

David knew too much of Saul's character to have confidence in him, had experienced enough of his enmity and treachery to make him wary. "David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him, and betook himself again to God." He said to Abiathar the priest "Bring hither the ephod".

No thanks to Saul that such words could be used, that Abiathar lived, or the ephod existed. Jehovah who established priesthood (though abused), preserved it, and He who commanded the ephod to be made, kept this also. If man fails, Jehovah does not, and if man exposes holy things to danger, He will watch over and preserve His own.

The outward and manifest unity of the body of Christ, Satan and men have marred and broken, but the essential unity God preserves intact, it will outlive the folly and sin of the members themselves, and,

that which our present divisions rob Him of, He will recover, by our humiliations and confessions.

I believe in a God whose purposes hinge not on man's faithfulness, although man's happiness does, and who will do all that his soul desireth. (Job xxiii. 13.)

With the priest and ephod David sought Jehovah, and said, "O Jehovah, God of Israel, Thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake, will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hands? Will Saul come down as thy servant hath heard? O Jehovah, God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell Thy servant." And Jehovah, said "He will come down." Then David said "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hands of Saul?" and Jehovah said "they will deliver thee up".

Beloved reader, pause here and mark this beautiful example of simple, confiding, open-hearted dealing with God. It is worthy of our imitation even in these days of increased light, and the full revelation of God as a Father. I am afraid that many Christians lack it.

His reverence, "O Jehovah, God of Israel," his freedom, "Thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul will come down," his simplicity, "Will he come down? and will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into their hands? How like his own words in the psalm "Ye people *pour* out your heart before Him," turn the vessel upside down, keep nothing back from God, carry about nothing unrevealed to Christ.

H. H.

### "THE 'LAMB' OF GOD."

I DESIGN now to look at the Book of Revelation only in one of its characters, viz., as setting forth the "Lamb," and in doing so, I do not mean to follow the order of the chapters, because the Lamb is mentioned in various circumstances, all through the book; but I wish to look at the ways in which the Lamb is spoken of, as respects the sinner. And first, we get Him as 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world'. It is in this character the poor sinner has to do with Him. We *must* begin our journey with the "*Lamb slain*". It is an individual thing, it is not a thing that we can put upon one another, nor upon the church; for although we have to account collectively for the way in which we have discharged ourselves as a body, yet, as poor *sinner*s, we have individually

to do with "the Lamb slain". And oh beloved, let us ask one another, have you and I begun our journey and been in company with "the Lamb" all the way? It is a most important question, and one which we cannot too often ask our souls.

Well, then, the next character in which we get Him is as the keeper of the Book of Life. The moment we have had to do with Him as "the Lamb slain" we at once get Him as the keeper of the Book of Life.

Again we have Him as the Lamb whose light is to surpass the light of the sun and moon, for we read "and the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and *the Lamb*" is the light thereof. (Rev. xxi. 23.) But now we meet Him in a most wondrous character, as "the Lamb" having *wrath*, "the chief captains and all the mighty men, and every bond man and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the *wrath of the Lamb*".

Beloved, this is a most perilous word to find in connection with "the Lamb". WRATH! but what is this wrath? It is jealousy on account of despised love, of rejected grace.

Again we get Him as *the married Lamb*. "Let us be glad and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." (Rev. xix. 7.)

Again we get Him as *the enthroned Lamb*; and again as *the praised Lamb*. You see, beloved, that as we have begun with "the Lamb," so we have not only to journey through the wilderness with Him, but also to spend our blessed eternity with the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. He has consented to be the slain Lamb throughout all generations of the world, as we know, as in the cases of Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, &c. The Paschal Lamb, the morning and evening sacrifice in the temple pointed to Him as thus slain; and lastly, when He Himself hung on the accursed tree. So the very moment we cross the threshold of time and enter the golden gates of eternity, we have Him as the *married Lamb*, the *enthroned Lamb*, the *praised Lamb*. Well then, might He stand forth and tell us, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and the ending," for we begin with the Lamb, and we are to be with the Lamb throughout the countless ages of eternity.

J. G. B.

### "THE LORD'S COMING."

IT is His special promise to His church. It was left as His parting consolation to the little band of disciples. They had obeyed His call. As Abraham had left his country, kindred, and his father's house to obey the call of God (Gen. xii. 1-4; and Heb. xi. 8), so had these also left all to follow One "fairer than the children of men". (Matt. iv. 20-22; Mark. x. 28.) They were the Lord's "out-call" from the "evil generation"—gathered around Him as their centre of attraction—owning Him *Lord*, in His rejection by the world.

He was about to leave them now, His "little little flock" (lit.), defenceless, alone, exposed to the scorn and hatred of the world "lying in the wicked One" (lit.). "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John xvi. 19.)

What was to be their anchor amid the storm?

"I will not leave you comfortless (marg., 'orphans') *I will come to you*." (John xiv. 18.) "I am going"—but it is "to prepare a place for you . . . I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also". (John xiv. 1-2.)

"I will come again." What a hope to keep in view above the waves! What a peace-speaking word in the stormiest hour!

Abraham, resting on God's word, "patiently endured" and "obtained the promise" (made to him). (Heb. vi. 15-20.)

"It is impossible for God to lie." In our Isaac, the Lord Jesus Christ, "the promises of God *in Him* are yea, and *in Him* Amen" (2 Cor. i. 20) to us; "a strong consolation" to us "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus . . .". (Heb. vi. 18-20.)

"Cast not therefore away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." ("Unto them that *look for Him*, shall He appear," &c., Heb. ix. 28.)

"For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the *promise*; for yet a little while, and He that shall come will come and will not tarry." (Heb. x. 36, 37.)

"I will come to you" . . . "Yet a little while,

and the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me, because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know," . . . &c. (John xiv. 18, 19, and John xvi. 16-22.) "A little while," (how He repeats that word,) and ye shall not see Me, and again a little while, and ye shall see Me," (the promise again!). Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be *turned into joy*"

. . . "I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

This dispensation is "the kingdom *and* patience of our Lord Jesus Christ". (Rev. i. 9.) We are in the Kingdom, and *in the* patience too. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (addressed to the Jewish remnant, this applies also to us the remnant of this age).

"Ye have need of patience." Not only because we are in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation," the consolation for which is, "Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh". (James v. 8.) Why that "also"? see the verse before. "Be patient therefore brethren, (the margin has 'suffer with long patience') unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the Husbandman *waiteth* for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until He receive the early and latter rain." *He* is the Husbandman, and *we* the precious fruit. "Be patient therefore until it be all ripe."

Shall we not then welcome rather the north wind of trial, as well as the south wind of His love, to blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, when we shall say "let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits"? (Cant. iv. 16.)

But also "ye have need of patience". For we groan to be delivered from "the body of this death" (Rom. vii. 24, marg.), from the presence of sin in us, as well as from its power over us. We *are* delivered from the latter; for deliverance from the former we "groan within ourselves". (Rom. viii. 23.) And "ye have need of patience," while we look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) *We know* that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John iii. 2.) "I shall be satisfied when I shall awake in thy likeness." (Ps. xvii. 15).

"Ye have need of patience." Oh crowning need of all, "*we would see Jesus!*" we would see Him as He

is. Now we see as through a glass darkly, beholding as in a glass the Glory of the Lord, indeed that glory, but only as it is revealed, on can now be revealed to our imperfect dim. Then "thine eyes shall see the king in His beauty shall behold the land that is very far off". xxxiii. 17.)

"It were a well-spent journey,  
Though seven deaths lay between;"

for

"The Lamb is all the glory,  
Of Immanuel's land."

"The Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. x: "A moment, the twinkling of an eye," shall it to "the land that is very far off"; then "ye no man taketh from you". "In Thy presence is joy." (Ps. xvi. 16.)

"So shall we ever be with the Lord," "Thou comfort one another with these words". (1 Th 18.)

What is the present moral effect of this fastened upon this promise? "Every man hath this hope on (lit.) Him, purifieth himself, ever is pure." (1 John iii. 3.)

What was it that separated Israel from Egypt the nations around? Was it not this? "I will bring you out . . . and I will take you to me people, and I will be to you a God . . . will bring you in," &c. (Ex. vi. 6-8.)

Of these, among others, we read that "these are in faith, not having received the promises, but seen them afar off, and were persuaded of the promises, and embraced them and *confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*. For they that as things *declare plainly* (do we?) that they seek a country, and truly if they had been mindful of that country whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city." (Heb. xi. 13-16.) Of that city we read shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." (Rev. xxi. 27.)

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as *strangers and pilgrims*, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." (1 Pet. ii. 11.) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if a man love the world, the love of the Father is not in

(1 John ii. 15.) What is it that is to overcome the world, with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, thronging around us, besieging every avenue of the soul? What can give us the anointed eye to pierce its miasmic vapours? what can deliver us from its delusions? for "every man walketh in a *vain* show, and disquieteth himself in vain". (Ps. xxxix. 6.)

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your *faith*." Moses "endured as seeing Him who is invisible". We too by faith "see Jesus" (Heb. ii. 9.) and "we wait for His Son, the Son of God, from heaven". (1 Thess. i. 10.)

"Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, *saith the Lord God Almighty*. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." (2 Cor. vi. vii. 1.)

Should any one say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" He who commands, calls Himself (in the same text) the "Lord, *God Almighty*". The "Lord" thy Lord and Master. Has He not a right to thine obedience and "God Almighty". El Shaddai, the All-sufficient One. "Our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. iii. 5.) "My grace is sufficient for thee." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) He is "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy". (Jude 24)

"And now little children, abide in Him, ("He, that abideth in Him, sineth not") (1 John iii. 6) that when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not shrink (lit.) away from Him at His coming". (1 John ii. 28.)

I need hardly say, this paper is only addressed to Christians.

As for you that are still "without Christ" alas! alas, for all that are left behind to await the coming of the Son of Man in judgment to the earth!

"Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him . . . and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. i. 7.)

You that keep His first coming in such joyful festivals, how will you greet the second advent of the Lord? "woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? Th day of the Lord is

darkness and not light". (Am. v. 18.) What can I say to you? "Kiss the Son lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled (see Rev. vi. 17) but a little. *Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.*" (Ps. ii. 12.)

### LEANING UPON THE BELOVED.

CANTICLES III. 6. VI. 10. VIII. 5.

"**W**HO is this that cometh out of the wilderness?" "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?" And again, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" In these precious scriptures we get a thought of the Lord's wondering delight in His Church: the outflow of a love that, in spite of all her grieving of His heart, can yet look past it all to see her hidden in Himself: all her blessing the purchase of His blood on Calvary: all her beauty the fruit of the travail of His soul, and the reflection of the glory of His own grace. We get a twofold thought here—our relation to the wilderness and our relationship to Christ. In the wilderness, yet hasting out of it, every step leaves the toils and sorrows of our little journey farther and farther behind. Do we cherish the word He has given us as we pass along in our heavenly strangership, not of it, but of Him? (John xvii. 16.) Travellers but not dwellers here, already in spirit past its borders, having found, even now, the fulness of our rest in Him, who shall be the fulness of our joy for ever.

Are we leaning on Him; making our weariness and our burdens His? This is what He wants. "Casting all your care upon Him," for this blessed reason, "He careth for you". Can we know he cares for us with such a tender care, and yet bear the burdens that He would make His own? Into this place of nearness, into which His blood has brought us, can doubts of His love enter? Ah! let us remember this, the blood has brought us there. Let us remember what it cost Him to bring us there, and what it costs Him to keep us there. Can we be anxious about our path if we take step by step with Him? Once He trod it for us, learning alone the lessons of suffering for the succour of His saints; but again, may we not say, He goes over it all with us. We never can know how intensely alone He was here, but He will never leave us for a moment. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will

come to you." Having entered as our forerunner into the heavenly places, in one sense He stands for us in the presence of the Father: in another sense He retraces with us again the journey homeward, unwearied because of the freshness of His unfailing love. Can our hearts dwell on the scenes around us while He is so near. Can we look away from His face (2 Cor. iv. 6) at the circumstances of the way? Surely Gabriel would answer, no. What shall we say? Shall it be self or Christ? Shall we give Him our undivided hearts? Can we give less to Him who, from the bosom of the Father, gave Himself for us.

"Leaning upon her beloved." What a thought it gives us of His occupation with us. In the presence of God for us: in the wilderness with us. Behold, what manner of love! How shall we comprehend it? It is our life lesson, and yet it is never learned. To know it as it is, would be to be filled with all the fulness of God. (Eph. iii. 18-19.)

If we are leaning upon Him, who else can fill our eyes and hearts but Jesus? and thus we have in Canticles vi. 10, "who is she that looketh forth?" It is our only comeliness before God. "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image" as we gaze, beholding Him in our hearts as in a glass, the glory is caught, impressed, and reflected. We are good for nothing but to be reflectors of Christ; and thus we find in Canticles vi. 10, the glory and the power following the looking forth, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners". The glory is centred in the person of Christ: in us it can be but reflected: yet if it be an unhindered reflection, the likeness will be true to the original: (John i. 16) only at any moment, a shadow may pass between, shewing us, the glory is all His own, it was but portrayed in the glass. For this reflecting then, there must be just the open mirror, turned toward the one object, having no shadow of aught else between. Is it thus with our hearts: do we want to be like Him? is there no hindering shadow of self—nothing between? Are we looking forth, in simple undivided worship of heart, always and only at Jesus? What lessons we get here: what need of diligent watching, that we keep undimmed this imparted glory, which only He can delight in. (Can. iv. 8-9.)

God then has linked the "looking forth", with the strength and the blessing: the leaning on Him, with the coming up from the wilderness. All our self

efforts are in vain. We must yield to conquer. We want, not so much to struggle with Satan, as to surrender to Christ, and to abide in Him as our shield and our victory. Our place indeed is the place of wrestlers, (Eph. vi.) but, in Him, it is the place of conquerors, yea, of more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. We need to take unto us the whole armour of God, and where He has put us to stand. Measured against the "power of His might," what are the hosts of Satan? But we are often looking the wrong way, at self and not at Christ: looking in instead of looking forth. We want to come *with Him*, (Can. iv. 8,) and with Him to look from the top of the mountains. Then as we lean on Him, we shall follow His steps, nearer and closer, until faith's full assurance is lost in the perfected, but not more real, companionship with Him whom we wait for—known and loved in the wilderness—seen without a cloud in the glory.

A. E. W.

#### NOTES ON 1 TIMOTHY, CHAPTERS I, II, III

CHAP. i. 1. We must see our salvation in God, as well as in Christ Jesus, the Godhead concerned in it. The Apostle says, God, our Saviour and Christ Jesus our hope.

Verses 8, 9, 10. Surely, beloved, the law is good, as the Apostle here says, but it must be kept in its proper place, and its place is not *in* the church, but outside the door, there to do its work among all outside. When the church looks out from her security, she sees naught but evil, then the law is at work among those mentioned in the 9th and 10th verses, all that is contrary to the glorious gospel of the blessed God. The heart of Paul burns when he speaks of the gospel; when speaking of the law, he says it is good; but his spirit breaks forth at the sound of the gospel—it is the *glorious* gospel of the *blessed* God (or as in the original), the *happy* God. And, beloved, how *happy* (so to speak), how happy the gospel makes the heart of our God, because in it He is a *giver*—it was His own mind He spoke when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive". When He of old spoke by the law, He was a *receiver*. The law, in all its ceremonies, was saying "*give me, give me*". The voice of the blessed gospel is "*receive ye, receive ye*". The gospel brings just as much glory to God, as the law in all its purity could do, and it brings other glories

ine besides. In it truth and mercy meet each ; and oh, how sweet a meeting—truth can still be , righteousness and peace kiss each other, while eousness in its full demand is answered.

the 17th verse, I judge that the spirit in Paul went le into prophecy, his longing heart pierced the vista, caught a glimpse of the bringing in of the remnant of own nation, and this glimpse gives rise to the tiful doxology into which the spirit now breaks 'now unto the *King Eternal*'. It is not now to the Saviour, for he sees Him seated on His ful throne, the throne of David, and sings as it , the Jewish song, "now to the King eternal, ortal, invisible, the only true God, be honour and , for ever and ever. Amen." He just breaks out is place, as in his note of admiration in Romans, speaking on the same subject, he says, "O the of the riches, both of the wisdom and know- of God," &c. And surely, beloved, when we thus the course of the spirit in St. Paul, it should not s a schoolboy learns his lessons, but to catch up rain of inspiration in our own spirit, and thus w it out into such blessed paths. We cannot, it ue, have immediate inspiration, like Paul's, but y I judge, it is not too much to say that we may were just catch the skirt of the inspiration.

d Chap.—We have seen, beloved, just now the ture of the house. They were taken from those de, but when once *in* the house each has his al occupations, and we see what this occupation is re first verse of the second chapter: "I exhort, fore, that first of all supplication, prayers, inter- ons, and giving of thanks be made for all men". on, beloved, as we come into the house, we must he the atmosphere of the house, we inhale the t breath of love, and so we must breathe out the sweet odour on all around us. As the loving and ing heart of Jesus sought us when we were outside, ur hearts ought to be going out in the same long- after those who are still there. Surely our feet caught in the net of love, and we must lay the net for them, as the hymn says, "We are the captives of love—the blessed captives of love". are to pray for those in authority, and for peace, use the peace of the Church depends on the peace d it.

1 verse—"For this is good and acceptable in the of *God our Saviour*." Good here signifies

comely. There is now no comeliness. Of old, when kings or priests were to be chosen they were to be without spot or stain in the flesh, but we have now no such beauty. It is moral beauty alone that God can look at ; not God our *Judge* but God our *Saviour*. Even Paul got a thorn in the flesh, but did it make him a whit less lovely in the sight of God? No, no, beloved, surely not.

We see in the 4th verse the *will of God*, that all should be saved. Then in the 5th verse how blessedly we see Him the *common God of all mankind*. He is the God of the Gentiles also and *one Mediator*. It is not *one Mediator* between God and the Jew, but one Mediator between God and man ; it is not the *Jew Christ Jesus* but the *man Christ Jesus*, who gave Himself a ransom for all. Then how sweetly we have the women set forth as a type of the Church, learning in all subjection from her Head, which is Christ Jesus. We are the house of God, He dwells in us—we are His habitation.

In the last verse of the 3rd chapter we have the mystery of godliness set forth—God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, and He alone could be justified in the Spirit, for He was pure and spotless, whether we see Him in the womb of the Virgin Mary or as the Man of sorrows ; but *we* can only be justified by the blood of Jesus, our sins and defilement need the blood of this sacrifice, Who gave Himself without spot to God. "Seen of angels." What a sight for angels to gaze on ! this bright and glorious one coming down to our earth, and taking the human form. Though angels could gaze with delight and admiration on the wondrous scene, they could but *gaze* ; *we* are more closely connected with it, we are interwoven in the work. "Preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." The only thing which brought the glorious Lord to our earth was, as it were, to fasten a link here below to the human family, that He might draw it up after Him to His glory.

J. G. B.

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### JEHOSHAPHAT.

[Continued from page 169.]

BEING delivered from all his enemies, it is written "So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest round about". (2 Chron. xx. 30.)

Often, the Christian is called to pass through periods of trouble, and conflict and sorrow. These may be the fruit of his own evil ways, or they may be the Father's chastisement on account of disobedience, or they may be the discipline preventive and salutary that God only sees to be needful. Such periods may be short, or they may be protracted and severe, but they are not uncommonly followed by a time of deliverance and comparative rest and quiet. It is like the wells and the palm trees of Elim that followed the bitterness of Marah.

But such times, pleasant though they be, are not without their accompanying dangers and snares.

To one who is but slightly acquainted with the deceitfulness of his own heart, it may be surprising in the extreme that the brightest records of zeal and devotedness to the Lord, on the page of Scripture, are so frequently followed by backsliding, disobedience and sin.

These divine memoirs, though short, are faithful and graphic. The Word of the Lord is in all respects THE TRUTH. Both by its doctrinal and its historical records it exposes the truth as to the character of man, no less than it reveals the truth concerning the character of God. Such is not the way of man.

Sad as it is, nevertheless it is written for our instruction and warning, that even Jehoshaphat entirely forgot the lesson he learned in his time of trouble. "After this did Jehoshaphat King of Judah

join himself with Ahaziah King of Israel, who did very wickedly, and he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Eziongaber."

The son of Ahab who reigned in his stead seems to have followed wholly in the evil ways of his father. It does not appear that anything in his character or actions afforded Jehoshaphat ground for resuming the friendship with that ungodly house, which by both His providence and His word the Lord had so signally rebuked.

Nevertheless, the snare is again spread, and again the unwary Jehoshaphat is taken therein.

It was only a commercial speculation; it was only a joint-interest in a shipping adventure. What could be more harmless than thus to divide the responsibility, to share the profit or the loss?

Moreover, it was a transaction for which high precedent might be pleaded, for it is written "King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongaber . . . and Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon, and they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, &c". (1 Kings ix. 26-28.)

But in the things of God nothing is more necessary than to "try things that differ". (Phil. i. 10. See margin.) Circumstances may at first sight appear very similar, and yet if closely examined there may be a difference which to spiritual discernment involves the application of totally diverse principles.

When Solomon availed himself of the skill of Hiram's servants, whether for hewing wood or for navigation, he was in no way compromised as the

Lord's servant. Hiram, though a Gentile king, was amongst the many kings who owned the dominion of Solomon, and the Lordship of Solomon's God. Moreover Solomon did not enter into a partnership agreement with Hiram, but dealt with him rather as a tributary king, paying both him and his servants liberally for their work. In connection with this read carefully 1 Kings iv. 29 to v. 12, and it will at once appear how very different was the footing upon which Hiram stood to Solomon from that on which Ahaziah stood to Jehoshaphat.

To transact business with the ungodly men of this world, without respect to moral character or creed, is an absolute necessity. This the Word of the Lord fully recognises. See 1 Cor. v. 10, where it is clearly allowed that otherwise "ye must needs go out of the world". Such is not God's intention. He would have His people to be "IN" it, though they are manifestly not "OF" it. Yea, the children of God have need to be in close contact with the world, and thus as the salt penetrates the meat which it preserves from corruption, so do they if their savour be not lost, even in the closest relationships which have the divine sanction, bring to bear upon the world and its corruption a salutary and preserving influence.

But very different is the principle involved when a business partnership is entered into. A Christian may buy from an ungodly man, and so transact the business that he is not at any point hindered from bearing a faithful testimony, if God so wills it, against the ungodliness of the man who sells to him.

In like manner he may sell to the ungodly, and be in no way answerable for, or privy to, his ungodly ways. Bargains, contracts, agreements of very various kinds may thus be entered into, and fulfilled with clean hands and a good conscience.

But whenever a mutual agreement is entered into of the nature of a partnership, wherein the profit or loss is shared in proportions large or small, at once there is that element introduced which commits the one to the action of the other. It is most aptly expressed by the Scripture figure of the yoke. Two animals yoked together must go in the same direction. The stronger will prevail. The other may resist or kick, but is nevertheless surely committed to the action of his fellow.

If the evil ways of an ungodly partner result in profit, how can the Christian share that profit, and yet

be clear in his protest against the evil? If they result in loss, can such loss be regarded otherwise than as the Lord's rebuke and chastisement?

In Jehoshaphat's case the ships were wrecked before they left the port. A faithful God refused to prosper a transaction that would surely have ended in the further backsliding of His child. And many a time has the child of God who so erred, reaped the same bitter fruit. Rarely does such a business partnership prosper; the instances are innumerable in which God has delivered his child from the snare, through the wreck of all his commercial prospects.

But this touches upon the practise of holding shares in any of the world's companies. In principle, what is the difference between holding one share among a thousand, and holding one share of two? or what difference is there in principle between a partnership where liability is limited, and one in which the liability is unlimited?

Some may plead that a shareholder is not responsible for the management of the company in which he invests. This may be true; but is it the business of one of the children of light to become a partner in anything, concerning the management of which he is in ignorance, and without the power to control it?

Would the Lord not rather teach His people by the story of Jehoshaphat to maintain their Nazarite separation to Himself with clean hands and a pure conscience.\*

But blindness on this subject, among the children of God, is the rule rather than the exception, and it is to be feared, the cause of the blindness is that love of money which is a root of all evil, and prefers a 12 per cent dividend, with eyes closed to the divine instructions, to a 4½ per cent with an enlightened conscience.

The principle of "the yoke," or that which binds

\* Whilst writing on this subject, the nation is startled by the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank. Many Christians are among the suffering shareholders. To them and to all, the loss may be a mighty blessing if they be exercised thereby. (See Heb. xii. 11)—but let it be referred to here as an illustration of the principle in question. So long as it seemed to prosper, and 12 per cent interest was forthcoming, the Christian shareholder as well as the ungodly, was content to remain in ignorance as to how the profits were made, happy if only they "sold out" in time, and pocketed through fraud, and at the expense of the rest, their principal as well as their interest! Better surely it is to be one of the losers, than one of the gainers of such truly filthy lucre.

When will the people of God awaken to an understanding of the principle that to be ignorant is not to be innocent. (See Lev. v. 17.)

one to the action of another, is no less evident in the great and powerful institution of Trades Unions. There the subjection of servants to masters so strongly inculcated in Scriptures is totally set aside. The employers may be ever so honourable, or even beloved and respected by some of their servants, but if "the Union" says "strike"—then the unionist tradesman, even though he be a Christian, must disobey the Lord, set aside His plain command, and though it bring his wife and family to privation and beggary, he must do the will of "the union" rather than the will of God.

Alas, it is an evil age—Satan is indeed its god and its prince, and so terribly are the principles of evil and apostacy developed, that already it seems as if the snare were settling down which shall ripen into that tyranny under which none shall be permitted to buy or sell without the mark of the beast.

Yet one other attempt did the persistent adversary make to ensnare Jehoshaphat through the house of Ahab. "Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships: but Jehoshaphat would not." (1 Kings xxii. 4-9.)

Oh the wiles of Satan—how subtle, and when once seen and exposed, how mean and contemptible. If he cannot ensnare Jehoshaphat, he will seek to ensnare his servants! But the chastisement and the rebuke had once again accomplished the restoration of Jehoshaphat's soul, and now he can boldly refuse.

Happy is he who can say NO to Satan's suggestions even though it be an offence to the world.

Thus ends the record of Jehoshaphat's life, but solemn and searching is the fact that the fruit of his life-long entanglement with the house of Ahab only developed fully after Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers. "Jehoram his son reigned in his stead . . . and he walked in the ways of the Kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab, for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife, and he wrought that which was evil in the sight of the Lord." (2 Chron. xxi. 1-6.)

Thus Satan gained his point, though Jehoshaphat was delivered. Thus actions may bear bitter fruit though years may pass, and the sowing time be long forgotten. Let Christian parents thus be warned, lest their sowing to the flesh result in a crop of corruption to be reaped and sorrowed over in their offspring, if not in themselves.

J. R. C.

## NOTES AND THOUGHTS FROM A CONFERENCE

ON 1 COR. II. TO IV. 4.

THE first chapter of this Epistle is like a narrow door, giving entrance to the rich and glorious blessings in the second chapter. It reveals the cross. But when once opened to give this entrance it is then closed. It gives entrance to nothing else. In Romans we have man's *righteousness* wholly set aside to make way for the righteousness of God. In Corinthians man's *wisdom* is in like manner as completely set aside to introduce the wisdom of God. And that wisdom is, in the world's esteem, and in appearance, foolishness. It is not that we preach foolishly without anything of our own, except our weakness, but rather the idea is, that the *matter* of our preaching is foolishness.

The world so regards it, and to them that perish, the Word of the Cross remains so. They do not reach to an understanding of it. But to them that believe it is the introduction of all blessing. The well is deep, but there is the spirit, wherewith to draw forth its living waters. All things are mine, says the Saviour, and the Spirit shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you. "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." "Arise, and walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it." But all true apprehension of truth must be in the power of the Spirit's teaching.

In like manner as to our part in building, according to chapter iii., human skill and earthly wisdom profit nothing. The responsibility of the builders is immense. If any man defile the temple, him will God defile. (It is the same word in both clauses.) Or if any man injure the temple, him will God injure. The lowest character of material supplied must be silver, nothing less than that. There may be gold and precious stones, or in default silver—no wood, hay, or stubble. The superstructure must be of the same material as the foundation. So of old, every offering had to be seasoned with salt. The speech now must be ever seasoned with salt. All service must be pure. By Him actions are weighed. Much may have to be burned up. How wise to burn it now! to do it ourselves by confession!

All effectual service is wrought in the spirit of dependence. "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but . . . with the hidden wisdom, which was ordained before the world, unto our glory."

Man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above. There is no saving power in human eloquence. There is no abiding fruit but from the incorruptible seed. The natural mind can comprehend many things, and the natural conscience can be enlightened, so as to form fair rules of justice and equity among men; but there is a point at which the mind and conscience fail, and no power of man can come in to meet the need. Nothing short of the Divine "Fiat"—"Let there be Light"—will suffice. God must shine in Almighty power into the heart to give the light of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. The effectual hindrance to receiving anything of God is confidence in our own wisdom, just as the effectual hindrance to receiving salvation is confidence in our own righteousness. Man is sharpening his intellect; but if any man will be wise indeed let him become a fool. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mind is to be used; the spirit of man searcheth all things, as the prophets searched diligently what, and what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify. But there remains the revelation of the Spirit of God, to make known to us that which is spiritually discerned, and which the natural mind, in its highest cultivation, cannot understand. Paul wrote in a time when the human intellect had produced some of its mightiest efforts; but the great teachers, the princes of this world, had crucified the Lord of Glory. They had not known the wisdom of God, and the cross remained to them, foolishness.

Let us be assured that there is no real saving work except that which is of the effectual operation of the Spirit. There may be much appearance of blessing; multitudes may receive the Word with joy; there may be knowledge and zeal, but without a divine work in the soul "the harvest will be a heap in the day of desperate sorrow". We have no sifting-time now in this country. It is an easy thing to take the name of Christian. It may involve no trial, but rather bring credit and advantage. Faith may stand simply in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God. But He will try the hearts; and, as to the builders, will try every man's work of what sort it is.

Paul was a living exemplification of his own doctrine. His own righteousness, and everything whereof he might have gloried, he counted as dross. He laboured in weakness, resting on the power of God,

just as he said: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do". His fear was lest his work should not all be gold; lest the cross should be made of none effect. He had no confidence in the flesh. There was no practical denial, in his own ways, of his doctrine. They were to see a proof of Christ speaking in him as well as living in him. I may preach the cross and practically deny it. Man must be hidden and God revealed. What is the temple without God? What was the power of the Son of God in His humiliation? Triumphant in weakness and in death! And Paul said, "Our sufficiency is of God." Because of the character of the witness, God owned him. He bore about the dying of Christ, and so Christ was manifest in his life. We have to learn this. We want gold. It may not be a nugget but only a grain, but let it be gold.

The power of God worked in Paul mightily. What need of faith, lest we limit God! Where is the bound of His power? "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams, and ye little hills like lambs?" Satan is working mightily, and now God is counter-working, showing the power of the Holy Ghost. The storm may come, but the Rock will stand. Everything else—all that is not of God—will break into nothingness and shame.

In the Corinthian Church there was the danger of putting men in God's place, and there is the same danger now. "I came to you," says Paul, "declaring the testimony of God." He wrote to the *Church of God*. And next, there was the tendency to exalt the flesh—"Ye are carnal". So now there is, in the habits of our day, the pampering of the flesh. He could not speak of the higher precious truths of the Gospel. He could tell nothing beyond Christ and Him crucified. To meet the flesh he brought in the cross. Further, there was the glorying in this present age—the time of the world when it had reached such high advancement, but he spoke not the wisdom of this age. It is not in the Greek "the world," but "the age". He spoke the wisdom which God had ordained before that age. And in our time, we too fall back on this. The world, by its present wisdom, no more knows God than of yore; and by its present vaunted wisdom, its philosophy falsely so called, and its science, is presenting something else to the mind, something alien to the Gospel, and falsifying the cross.